

REPRESENTATIVE BRITISH DRAMAS

VICTORIAN AND MODERN

REPRESENTATIVE BRITISH DRAMAS

VICTORIAN AND MODERN

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO EACH PLAY

BY

MONTROSE J. MOSES



Pierce Library
WITHDRAWN
Eastern Oregon University
From **EOU Library**
La Grande, OR 97850

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1918

Copyright, 1918,
BY LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

All rights reserved

Norwood Press

Set up and electrotyped by J. S. Cushing Co., Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.
Presswork by S. J. Parkhill & Co., Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

TO

LEWIS FREEMAN MOTT

WHO HAS DEVOTED SO MANY
YEARS TO AWAKENING IN
OTHERS A KEEN APPRECI-
ATION OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Victorian and modern. Bost. Little, 1918. 861p. \$4.
 Complete text of twenty-one plays published between 1820 and 1913, each preceded by biographical introduction emphasizing important features in the history of the British theater. Duplicates only two of the selection in Dickinson's *Chief contemporary dramatists* (*Booklist*, 11:449, Je 15) individual bibliographies for the plays, and general bibliography (3p.)
 822 Cards for individual plays (21) Analytic: English drama—Bibliography
 18-23284/24

PREFACE

THE story is told of Douglas Jerrold that a friend once came to him and said, "The world is not as good as it used to be." And Jerrold, with his usual conversational preparedness, replied, "My dear fellow, it never was."

The same anecdote might be utilized in describing the condition of the English drama during its successive periods. There have always been those who took the pessimistic view of theatrical conditions; to them the English stage never has been anything but a failure. There always will be those who are looking for a drama other than the one which is being given them.

But it is true that the English stage never fell upon duller or more arid times than the period between 1800 and the commencement of the so-called "New Drama." One might almost be tempted to say that the last great play written in England was "The School for Scandal"; and probably to this might be added Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer." Artificial though these may be in their treatment of the comedy of manners, they nevertheless give a criticism of life and character which remains universal and which, in its satire, has something of the pungent elementary characteristic of La Fontaine and Molière. There is not a drama written in England between the time of Sheridan or Goldsmith and 1880 that may claim to any perennial freshness.

One might explain the poverty of the British stage, after the freeing of the theatres in 1843, by saying that for a long period it had no real true social basis. The freeing of the theatres did not mean, in any true sense of the word, the freedom of the theatre. For, no sooner was the ban lifted on the presentation of Shakespeare in patented houses, than a wildest competition arose, which resulted in the cheapening of theatrical performances, and in the unthinking exploitation of French drama.

What was best in the theatre was kept alive by those actors who took unto themselves the robe of splendour bequeathed them by David Garrick. When one considers certain historical facts which explain the reasons for the romanticism of Sheridan Knowles and Bulwer-Lytton, which give an economic basis to the adaptations from the French, and which set the artistic reasons for the form of drama practised by those dramatists who contented themselves with a pale imitation of Shakespeare and Racine, there is created a clear impression of certain defined channels of development in the British theatre of the nineteenth century. Blot out the personalities of David Garrick, Kean, the Kembles, including Siddons, Macready, and Samuel Phelps, and you blot out a very large section of the British drama.

The romantic revival in England was a pale imitation of Elizabethan imagery and strength. From the days of Garrick to the time of Irving, the British drama was influenced by the individual actor, rather than by any deep social conscience.

And for that reason bombast took the place of literary style, and this bombast succeeded simply because it afforded a diction which a distinctive group of players was able to gild into some semblance of reality and truth.

The present book bears the title, "Representative British Dramas: Victorian and Modern." There was a very distinct cleavage between the drama of the early period of the nineteenth century and of the later — a cleavage due to no sudden revolution, but to a gradual realization of the democratic idea in England — gradual rise in importance of the people, from 1832, when the reform bills began to leave their impress on the mass, and to emphasize conditions of labour and of the working classes. In its actual effect on the literature of the time, this social interest resulted in a sentimental attitude which was behind the establishment of Sunday schools in England, and behind the evolution of a certain type of story and of school-book written to appeal to definite strata of society.

It has been the object of the Editor to select those plays which would emphasize definite characteristics in the development of the British drama of the nineteenth century, beginning with the pseudo-romantic, and passing through the successive periods which would reveal how completely drama was divorced from literature and how sorely dramatic diction suffered because of its utter lack of literary style. Whatever style the British drama had before the advent of Jones and Pinero and Oscar Wilde was preserved in the poetic dramas of Browning and Tennyson — where style was accounted more than action. This is why the plays by Browning and Tennyson are of value in nineteenth-century drama. They were given on the stage of the time, but they failed of marked success, separate from the success bestowed upon the individual actors, whose artistic bravery was the reason for their production.

In the Introductions to all of the plays included in this volume, the Editor has endeavoured to state those principal events in the British drama of the nineteenth century which would point to progressive ideas gaining headway. From the time of Bulwer-Lytton's parliamentary activities in the cause of the theatre, to the present, there have been innumerable workers who have upheld the real freedom of the British stage, who have fought consistently against the cloying limitations of censorship, and who have believed persistently in, and pled continually for, the endowment of the theatre, pointing to what endowment has done for the French stage. There have been those who have battled against the prejudices of the British public, and for freedom of thought and speech on the stage — all of the mile-posts in dramatic progress have been indicated in their proper places.

There will also be emphasized the burlesque spirit which dominated the English stage for so long a while, and which was kept alive largely by members of the editorial staff of *Punch*. If *Punch* has been for so many generations the guardian of English humour, that famous weekly has likewise done much to encourage the most light and trivial attitude toward the British stage — the attitude which reacted on such a writer as Thackeray, who regarded burlesque and pantomime, as well as the extravaganza of make-believe, in the theatre very much as a child would regard them.

More than once, during the course of the Introductions, it has been emphasized that another reason for the poverty of the British stage, before the advent of the "New Drama", was the lack of any just copyright law. This lack made possible for the British theatre managers to have translated freely whatever they liked of current French productions. The native dramatist could find no encour-

ent for original work, but had to sink his talents to the level of a hack translator. There was a great demand for the tried French successes, and thus many British play cost the manager a mere pittance, but cost the English playwright artistic soul.

There is no telling what the history of the British stage might have been, had the censorship, which was bequeathed to it through the beneficent guardianship of Sir Robert Walpole, not persisted through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

It was fostered by Victorian purity and smugness, and to its monumentally vicious credit must be placed the damning truth that it has kept from the English stage, for over a century, any thought reflective of the true attitude of mind and soul of the progressive thinkers in England. It will be emphasized, in the introductions, in what manner censorship has been evaded, and through what position progressive thought has had to advance in order to avoid the cloying effect of an anachronistic public official, the Reader of Plays. Had it not been for the censor, the British dramatists would probably have been more fearless and far-reaching in their criticism of life. The British drama of intellectual honesty has developed in spite of the Reader of Plays, and in defiance of English law. Another real concern which, for many years, has agitated the English stage has been the need for an Endowed Theatre. Out of this has grown the actual workings of the Repertory Theatre, and the many agitations for a playhouse freed of the necessity for commercial competition.

Matthew Arnold raised the cry when, after having seen Sarah Bernhardt in London for the first time, he uttered some thoughts regarding the difference between drama in England and the drama in France. The substance of his plea was — to organize the theatre.

It is this spirit which has actuated Henry Arthur Jones, William Archer, Granville Barker, St. John Hankin, and all those identified with the repertory theatres in England and the Provinces, in their arguments for the governmental recognition of the theatre.

The Table of Contents will indicate the scope of the present collection. The plays herein have all had their stage production. There has been no attempt to classify that species of play represented by George Meredith's "The Sentimental Education" and Thomas Hardy's "The Dynasts." On the other hand, limitations of space have prevented the inclusion of any play by George Bernard Shaw, J. M. Barrie, and Stephen Phillips. This omission takes from the present view of modern drama three important characteristics, — one represented by Shaw as an upholder of the thesis play, another represented by Barrie as the one exponent of fantasy, and the third represented by Phillips as a follower of the realistic drama. But the characteristics of these three important figures in current English drama are so well known to the public that whatever this present collection lacks through their absence can be readily supplied by general knowledge.

It has been thought wise to make a separate group of the Irish plays, which represent such a distinct development. One might argue that if this is to be done, some indication should be given of the richness of such a Welsh play as J. O. Jones's "Change", or of such local characteristics as are to be found in "Bunt of the Strings." The limitations of space, however, preclude any minute lines being drawn.

The Editor has to thank personally Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, Mr. John Masefield, Lady Gregory, Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mr. Padraic Colum for their coöpera-

tion, and for their courteous granting of permission to use their plays. In addition to which, thanks are due to the publishers of Pinero, Galsworthy, Barker, Harkness, Synge, and Dunsany, for extending the courtesies of copyright. Acknowledgment has to be made to certain magazines in which a small proportion of the material here used in the Introductions was originally published. Throughout the preparation of the entire work, the Editor has had the splendid encouragement and invaluable assistance of his wife.

It is significant that such a collection as this should be issued at a time when the Great War is making a cleavage between things that were before August, 1914, and things that are to be. The present volume may, therefore, be said to close an era in the history of the British stage. When the book is opened on a new era, one may expect a drama that has characteristics as distinct from those of the "New Drama", so called, as the differences existing between the "New Drama" and the plays of the Tom Robertson period.

MONTROSE J. MOSES

NEW YORK, April, 1918.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACE	vii
VIRGINIUS	1
<i>James Sheridan Knowles.</i>	
BLACK-EY'D SUSAN ; or, All in the Downs	49
<i>Douglas Jerrold.</i>	
RICHELIEU ; or, The Conspiracy	77
<i>Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton.</i>	
LONDON ASSURANCE	137
<i>Dion Boucicault.</i>	
A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON	181
<i>Robert Browning.</i>	
THE TICKET-OF-LEAVE MAN	217
<i>Tom Taylor.</i>	
CASTE	269
<i>T. W. Robertson.</i>	
H. M. S. PINAFORE ; or, The Lass That Loved a Sailor	313
<i>W. S. Gilbert.</i>	
BECKET	339
<i>Alfred Tennyson.</i>	
THE MASQUERADERS	399
<i>Henry Arthur Jones.</i>	
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST	445
<i>Oscar Wilde.</i>	

1899.	THE GAY LORD QUEX	4
	<i>Arthur Wing Pinero.</i>	
1906.	THE SILVER BOX	5
	<i>John Galsworthy.</i>	
1907.	THE CASSILIS ENGAGEMENT	6
	<i>St. John Hankin.</i>	
1910.	THE MADRAS HOUSE	6
	<i>H. Granville Barker.</i>	
1910.	THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT	7
	<i>John Masefield.</i>	
	* * *	
	W. B. YEATS AND THE IRISH SCHOOL OF PLAYWRIGHTS	7
1902.	CATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN	7
	<i>William Butler Yeats.</i>	
1908.	THE WORKHOUSE WARD	7
	<i>Lady Augusta Gregory.</i>	
1904.	RIDERS TO THE SEA	7
	<i>John M. Synge.</i>	
1910.	THOMAS MUSKERRY	7
	<i>Padraic Colum.</i>	
1913.	THE GODS OF THE MOUNTAIN	8
	<i>Lord Dunsany.</i>	
	GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY	8
	INDIVIDUAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR PLAYS	8

VIRGINIUS

(1820)

By JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES

(1784-1862)

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES, the cousin of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and the friend of Hazlitt, Lamb, and Coleridge, was born on May 12, 1784. His career as a playwright overshadows the fact that he had studied medicine with an idea of following that profession. His experiences as an actor are likewise overshadowed by his friendship with and writing for other actors much greater than he. It was Edmund Kean that he prepared "Leo; or, The Gipsy" and "Caius Gracchus." It was Kean, also, that he first conceived "Virginius", which play connects his activities with those of John Howard Payne, who had also written a drama on the same subject for the same actor. A long list of plays is to the credit of Knowles, the most significant, other than the ones mentioned, being "The Hunchback" (1832), "The Love Chase" (1833), and "The Love Chase" (1837).

Knowles flourished at a time characterized by a special type of acting. He grew up in the atmosphere of critics like Hazlitt and Lamb, who were much more interested in a type of comedy celebrated in their dramatic essays, than in any product of an original nature; and they were given to the expending of much of their attention on the human excellencies of the actor's art. What they found of value in Knowles was what Knowles imitated of the old type of English tragedy and comedy. Charles Lamb wrote the prologue to "The Wife", spoken by Mr. Kean. No one seemed to know that the prologue was written by him; Knowles's acknowledgment in the preface to the play was misleading, for it read as follows:

To my early, my trusty, and my honoured friend, Charles Lamb, I owe my thanks for a delightful Epilogue composed almost as soon as it was requested. To an equally dear friend I am equally indebted for my Prologue.

The Epilogue was spoken by Miss Ellen Tree.

The esteem in which Knowles was held by his friends is measured by the estimate of him in William Hazlitt's "The Spirit of the Age." In this he writes:

We should not feel that we had discharged our obligations to truth or friendship, if we were to let this volume go without introducing into it the name of the author of "Virginius." This is the more proper, inasmuch as he is a character by himself, and the only poet now living that is a mere poet. If we were asked what sort of a man Mr. Knowles is, we could only say "he is the writer of 'Virginius.'" His most intimate friends see nothing in him which they could trace the work to the author. The seeds of dramatic genius are contained and fostered in the warmth of the blood that flows in his veins; his heart dictates to his head. The most unconscious, the most unpretending, the most artless of mortals, he instinctively obeys the impulses of natural feeling, and produces a perfect work of art. He has hardly read

a poem or a play, or seen anything in the world, but he hears the anxious beatings of his own heart, and makes others feel them by the force of sympathy. Ignorant alike of rules, regardless of models, he follows the steps of truth and simplicity; and strength, proportion, and delicacy are the infallible results. By thinking of nothing but his subject, he rivets the attention of the audience to it. All his dialogue tends to action, all his situations form classic groups. There is no doubt that "*Virginius*" is the best acting tragedy that has been produced on the modern stage. Mr. Knowles himself was a player at one time, and this circumstance has probably enabled him to judge of the picturesque and dramatic effect of his lines, as we think it might have assisted Shakespeare. There is no impertinent display, no flaunting poetry: the writer immediately conceives how a thought would tell if he had to speak it himself. Mr. Knowles is the first tragic writer of the age; in other respects he is a common man; and divides his time and his affections between his plots and his fishing-tackle, between the Muses' spring, and those mountain streams which sparkle like his own eye, and gush out like his own voice at the sight of an old friend. We have known him almost from a child, and we must say he appears to us the same boy-poet that he ever was. He has been cradled in song, and rocked in it as in a dream, forgetful of himself and of the world!

It would seem that Knowles, throughout his career, was handicapped by the inadequacy of the copyright law, which robbed him of much of his income. He was continually in financial distress. Note the effect the success of "*The Hunchback*" had upon him when it was produced on April 5, 1832. He says:

I sank down on my knees and from the bottom of my soul thanked God for His wondrous kindness to me. I was thinking on the bairns at home, and if ever I uttered the prayer of a grateful heart it was in that little chamber.

Very often, Knowles had to eke out his income by returning to the stage.

Knowles's "*Virginius*" was declined by Kean because of a rumour that a play on the same subject was scheduled for Drury Lane. The drama, however, was produced at the Glasgow Theatre in an indifferent manner, and Macready's friend Tait, witnessed it. The dramatist and the actor had met at many social functions and while Macready realized in him much dramatic ability, he recognized in him nothing much of an actor. He writes, after having witnessed Ellen Tree and Charles Kean in "*The Wife*", in which Knowles played:

Knowles — was *Knowles*; raw, energetic, harsh, but with mind and purpose, badly and bluntly expressed, that gave interest to his performance; but he is no artist, nor, in my opinion, can he ever be such.

This was written out of the bitterness of an experience with Knowles which had somewhat cooled their friendship since the days of "*Virginius*."

"*Virginius*" was first produced on May 17, 1820, with Macready in the title rôle. Talfourd says:

The year 1820 gave Lamb an interest in Macready beyond that which he had derived from the introduction of Lloyd, arising from the power with which he animated the first production of one of his oldest friends — "*Virginius*."

At the very beginning of their friendship Lamb had liked Knowles, but had not detected in him any extraordinary dramatic ability. We are told that Lamb's interest in tragedy was over-clouded by the tragedy of his own life, and that he was particularly in favour of the paternal scenes in "*Virginius*", which were made appealing through the great acting of Macready. Late in 1820, Lamb sent to Knowles some congratulatory verses on "*Virginius*." It was five years after that John Robinson met Knowles at Lamb's, and records:

A very Irishman in manners, tho' of the better kind. Seemingly a warm-hearted man. No marks of talent in his conversation, but a bold decisive tone. He spoke of William Hazlitt as his friend, and this does not speak for his discretion or moral feeling.

The friendship between Knowles and Lamb ripened, and the dramatist visited him at Enfield. Lamb's letters contain constant reference to him. Macready's own words are quoted regarding "*Virginius*":

After some hesitation I thought it best to get the business [of reading the MS] over, to do at once what I had engaged to do, and I sat down determinedly to my work. The freshness and simplicity of the dialogue fixed my attention; I read on and on, and was soon absorbed in the interest of the story and the passion of the scenes, till at its close I found myself in such a state of excitement that for a time I was undecided what step to take. Impulse was in the ascendant, and, snatching up my pen, I hurriedly wrote, as my agitated feelings prompted, a letter to the author, to me then a perfect stranger.

I was closing my letter as the postman's bell was sounded up the street, when the thought occurred to me, "What have I written? It may seem wild and extravagant; I had better reconsider it." I tore the letter, and sallying out, hastened directly to my friend Proctor's lodgings, wishing to consult him, and test by his the correctness of my own judgment. He was from home, and left a card, requesting him to breakfast with me next day, having something very remarkable to show him. After dinner, at a coffee-house, I returned home, and in more collected mood again read over the impassioned scenes, in which Knowles has given heart and life to the characters of the old Roman story. My first impressions were confirmed by a careful re-perusal, and, in sober certainty of its justness, I wrote my opinion of the work to Knowles, pointing out some little oversights, and assuring him of my best exertions to procure its acceptance from the managers, and to obtain the highest payment for it.

Evidently the letter of Knowles, dated Glasgow, April 20, 1820, was in reply to his communication. It runs as follows:

My dear Sir,

For bare Sir is out of the question — I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the most kind, I must not say flattering, though most flattering, letter that you have written to me. Really I cannot reply to it in any manner that will satisfy myself, so I shall only once for all repeat, I thank you! and feel as if I should never forget the opening of a correspondence with Mr. Macready. You must have a very warm heart. Do not think, I entreat you, that because I express myself imperfectly — very imperfectly — there is any deficiency where there ought not to be.

I have but a few minutes, I should say moments, to write. All your suggestions I have attended to; I believe so, and if I have not I fully propose to attend to them, except so far as the word "squeak" is concerned; that word I know not how to lose for want of a fit substitute — the smallest possible sound. Find out a term and make the alteration yourself; or if you cannot and still wish an alteration, do what you like. I don't care about it, I merely submit the matter to you. Oh, I have forgotten the word "cheer." What shall I do also in the way of finding a substitute for that word?

I cannot stop to write another line. I am very much your debtor, and truly

Your grateful humble servant,

J. S. Knowles.

Covent Garden promised Knowles £400 for twenty nights, and of this Macready says:

Not one sixpence was allowed for its [the play's] mis-en-scène, and to be correct in my costumes I was obliged to purchase my own dresses. But my heart was in the work, so much so that it would seem my zeal ran the risk of outstripping discretion, for it was made a complaint by Egerton, the *Numitorius*, that the youngest man in the theatre should take on him to order and direct his elders.

There was some doubt as to whether or not "*Virginius*" would pass the censor but it finally succeeded in going through the Lord Chamberlain's office, with certain passages on tyranny erased from it. These censored passages were cut from the text through the personal suggestion of George IV, who had demanded seeing the script after it had passed the official reader. Knowles sought to print the play immediately because of this. Macready consulted with John Murray, the London publisher, about issuing it. But Murray, whose reader was the Reverend J. Milman, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, was advised to have nothing to do with the printed play. In consequence, Ridgway, of Piccadilly, issued it, and before many weeks it had passed into several editions.

Macready, being somewhat of a snob, describes how Knowles, in a condition very much the worse for wear, hunted him out while he, Macready, was at a dinner party, and presented him with a package containing the printed copy of "*Virginius*", which had been dedicated to him. Evidently, Macready's rude treatment of Knowles on this evening gave him some remorse, for he sent for the playwright on his return home from the dinner party, and, as he expressed it, "All was made perfectly smooth between us."

The acting part of "*Virginius*", given by Macready to John Forster, is not preserved, with a letter from the actor, in the Dyce and Forster Libraries, South Kensington. The letter runs as follows:

I enclose the part of *Virginius* as delivered to me (after I read the play at Fawcett's request in his Covent Garden greenroom, April 20) from the Covent Garden copyist, poor old Hill. (You will see that even the skill of copying out parts is declined with our declining drama!) It has been in use with me above thirty years. You will smile at the Latin memoranda or suggestions to excite my feelings! These I used to write in Latin, sometimes in Greek, sometimes in Italian, because as at that time I could not command a dressing-room ex-

clusively to myself, I did not choose that any one who might be "chummed" with me should look over, or rather should understand my notes. No fear of any of them penetrating beyond English!

I send you also the identical parchment I used on my first performance of this character, and which I have kept, with a sort of superstitious partiality till it has become what you see, ever since. It amazes yet pleases me these things have interest in your eyes — they have none in mine. A deep melancholy is on me in thinking and feeling that I shall never again excite the sympathies of those to whom I feel a sort of absolute affection.

From this, one will see the sentimental affection bestowed by Macready on the part. His "Diaries" illustrate a further sentimental affection for the dramatist who wrote the play. The two men were diametrically opposed as to character, Knowles being freer in his manner than the actor, who never was devoid of self-consciousness. Knowles found himself thrust from an atmosphere of school-teacher into an atmosphere enriched by the very best literary minds of the time. Little did some of his friends realize, if tradition is true, that much of "Virginius" was written on slates in the schoolroom, where, for thirteen hours a day, Knowles was a slave to the cause of education. William Archer says:

When we compare "Virginius" with other tragedies of the time — the works of Maturin and Sheil, for example, not to mention obscurer names — we can understand the enthusiasm awakened by the frank humanity of its subject and the rhetorical vigor of its style.

Yet no excellence of dramatic technique, nor any past favours, could ever govern Macready's temperamental attitude toward his friends. There was no motive mean enough that, at different times, Macready did not impute this motive to Knowles. In his "Diaries", during 1833, we find record of these ups and downs of friendship from month to month. Now, Macready is saying, "I would not have a genius for his heart." Again he is exclaiming that Knowles, at his "Benefit", pronounced a "eulogistic eulogium on me", an act which certainly was pleasing to the vain player. Later on, Macready is hinting at drunkenness and illicit living; and later still, he declares that Knowles was fast becoming envious of the success of Bulwer-Lytton. The entries in his "Diaries", which refer to the author of "Virginius", show very clearly that whatever financial relations the two had, they played havoc with their opinions of each other at different times.

Knowles had many sources to turn to in the construction of "Virginius." In Edward Stirling's "Old Drury Lane", there is mentioned a tragedy by R. P., published in 1576, in black letter and not divided into acts,

Wherein [so the title-page reads] is lively expressed a rare example of the vertue of chastity in wishing rather to be slaine at her own Father's hands than to become a victim of the wicked Judge Appius.

Some commentators believe this to have been Knowles's source. But there were dramas dealing with the same subject during the seventeenth century, by Mairet, Leclerc and Campistron. The reason there were so many plays on the theme of "Virginius" in the eighteenth century was due to the movement for political freedom which, beginning about the middle of the century, inspired dramatists of all nationalities to use *Virginius* as their hero. In 1772, Lessing used the

story in a modern Italian setting. In 1773, Alfieri; 1760, Miss Brooke, in England; the same year, La Beaumelle, in France; 1769, Chabanon; 1786, Laharpe; 1827, Guiraud; 1845, La Tour Saint-Ybars, utilized the theme. Students interested in a comparative study of plays will find it profitable to study these texts and note the variations.

To Knowles's play there was added a Prologue by J. H. Reynolds, and an Epilogue by the poet, Barry Cornwall. Nowhere is an impression of the poet's literary excellence better summed up than in a contemporary notice given by a reviewer in the *London Magazine* for June, 1820, in which, after recalling a play on "Virginius" by Webster, he writes of Knowles's drama in the following terms:

The merits of "Virginius" consist in (to a certain point) the plot, which is simple without being bald: the diction too is colloquial and highly spirited; in short, it is the true language of life, which almost all authors of later years have been afraid to venture on; — there is no fustian or unnecessary mystification. . . . It is simple and free from the heavy commonplace of "Douglas", and (though with less poetry and general power) is more dramatic than W. Coleridge's "Remorse"; it is decidedly better than "Bertram."

The critic goes on to call attention to the faults in Knowles's tragedy, claiming that the play should have ended with act four; that the fifth act is marked by verbiage; and that the whole manuscript is marred by a certain play on words, the dialogue being loosely written and the lines often unbeautiful.

The reader has ample sources to turn to for a comparative study of the actors who have, at different times, played *Virginius*, from Macready to Phelps and John McCullough.

A change of heart seems to have come over the British drama with the significant political events which began in 1832. We must regard Knowles, not in the light of having a very great influence on the drama which was to follow, but as having been a distinct product of the conventions of the theatre and of the acting of his time. Nowhere is there a keener or more discerning statement regarding Knowles than in Augustin Filon's "The English Stage", where that astute French critic writes:

He [Knowles] promised to return to Truth and Nature, the invariable programme of all attempts at reforming the drama. And, as a matter of fact, *Virginius* might be accepted in a certain sense as a return to Truth and Nature. It belonged to what we were going to call in France, twenty-five years later, the School of Common Sense. Or, if one prefers to look back instead of forward, one might say that in it the rules of Diderot and Sedaine's *Drame Bourgeois* seem to have been transferred to Roman tragedy.

In accordance with the convention of poetic drama, Knowles, in "Virginius", has resorted to alternate use of poetry and prose, his lines often being merely poetry in form only, and very commonplace in thought. No critics seem to disagree regarding the importance of Macready's acting as a contributive element in the success of "Virginius." What kept it alive on the British stage for so many years after it was written was the opportunity it offered for the display of that peculiar type of acting characteristic of Kean, the Kembles, Macready, and Samuel Phelps. Yet the emotional value of the play, as a theatrical *tour de force*, is still holding, even when read.

VIRINIUS

A. TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS AS PERFORMED
AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN

BY JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES, Esq.

DEDICATION

TO WILLIAM MACREADY, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

What can I do less than dedicate this Tragedy to you ! This is a question which you cannot answer ; but I can — I cannot do less ; and if I could do more, ought, and would.

I was a perfect stranger to you : You read my play, and at once committed yourself respecting its merits. This, perhaps, is not saying much for your head — but it says a great deal for your heart ; and that is the consideration which, above all others, makes me feel happy, and proud, in subscribing myself,

Your grateful Friend and Servant,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

London, May 20, 1820.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS Play was written in great haste, and, no doubt, abounds in defects — but it is a question whether it would have been less imperfect, had I taken a year to compose it. It was revolved and executed in about three months, in the midst of very numerous and arduous avocations. To a distinguished individual who suggested to me the idea of writing it, I shall ever feel grateful.

I owe the public an apology for the last act ; and this is my apology — History gives two accounts of the manner of Appius's death : one, that he committed suicide ; the other, that he was destroyed privately by the Tribunes. Had I selected for my catastrophe the former incident, the character of the tyrant had stood too prominent ; by adopting the latter, I should have violated the respect due to a Christian audience. After having excited such an interest for Virginius, it would have been indecent to represent him in the attitude of taking the law into his own hands. I therefore adopted the idea of his destroying Appius in a fit of temporary insanity, which gives the catastrophe the air of a visitation of Providence.

I am most sensible of the very great degree in which I am indebted to the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden ; and I beg them to believe that I feel more than I can very readily express. To forget what I owe to the Theatre where my Play was first performed, would be ungrateful ; and, under any circumstances, to omit the acknowledgment of it would be unprincipled and mean. I take, therefore, this opportunity of thanking, also, the Company of the Glasgow Theatre.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MEN

		<i>Covent Garden, 1820</i>	<i>Park, 1824</i>
<i>Appius Claudius</i>	} <i>Decemvirs</i>	Mr. Abbott	Mr. Ryder
<i>Publius Oppius</i>		Mr. White	Mr. Hunt
<i>Publius</i>		Mr. Jefferies	Mr. S. Pearson
<i>Publius</i>	} <i>Patricians</i>	Mr. Norris	_____
<i>Publius</i>		Mr. Vedy	_____
<i>Publius Claudius</i>	} <i>Clients to Appius</i>	Mr. Connor	Mr. Lovell
<i>Publius</i>		Mr. Claremont	Mr. Gallot
<i>Publius</i>	<i>A Veteran</i>	Mr. Terry	Mr. Barry
<i>Publius</i>	<i>A Centurion</i>	Mr. Macready	Mr. Macready
<i>Publius</i>	<i>His brother-in-law</i>	Mr. Egerton	Mr. Gann
<i>Publius</i>	<i>In love with Virginia</i> . . .	Mr. C. Kemble	Mr. Wheatley
<i>Publius</i>	<i>Brother of Icilius</i>	Mr. Comer	Mr. Crocker
<i>Publius</i>	} <i>Soldiers</i>	Mr. Mears	Mr. King
<i>Publius</i>		Mr. Treby	Mr. Gourlay
<i>Publius</i>		Mr. Crumpton	Mr. Wilmot
<i>Publius</i>	} <i>Citizens</i>	Mr. Faucit	Mr. Brydges
<i>Publius</i>		Mr. Atkins	Mr. Povey
<i>Publius</i>		Mr. King	Mr. Freeland

WOMEN

<i>Virginia</i> . . .	<i>Daughter of Virginus</i> . .	Miss Foote	Mrs. Hunt
<i>Virginia</i> . . .	<i>Her nurse</i>	Mrs. Faucit	Miss Cushman
<i>Female Slave</i>		Mrs. Chipp	Mrs. Burrows
<i>Citizens, Male and Female — Soldiers, Lictors, &c.</i>			

SCENE, chiefly Rome.

[The passages marked with inverted commas are omitted in the representation.]

PROLOGUE

By T. Reynolds, Esq., and spoken by Miss Booth

[*Speaking behind*] Nay, Mr. Fawcett, give me leave, I pray,
The audience wait, and I must have my way. [*Enters*]
What! curb a woman's tongue! — As I'm alive,
The wretch would mar our old prerogative!
Ladies, by very dint of pertinacity,
Have I preserv'd the glory of loquacity!

Oh! could you gaze, as I am gazing now,
And see each man behind, with gathered brow,
And clenched hand, (tho' nought my spirit damps)
Beckoning, with threats, my presence, from the lamps:
Each, as I broke my way, declared how well
His art could woo you — to be peaceable!
One is well robed — a second greatly shines,
In the nice balance, of *cast-iron* lines;
A third can sing — a fourth can touch your tears —
A fifth — "I'll see no more!" — a fifth appears,
Who hath been once in Italy, and seen Rome;
In short — there's quite a hubbub in the Green Room.
But I — a very woman — careless — light —
Fleet idly to your presence, this fair night;
And, craving your sweet pardon, fain would say
A kind word for the poet, and his play.

To-night, no idle nondescript lays waste
The fairy, and yet placid, bower of taste:
No story, piled with dark and cumbrous fate,
And words that stagger under their own weight;
But one of silent grandeur — simply said,
As tho' it were awaken'd from the dead!
It is a tale — made beautiful by years; —
Of pure, old, Roman sorrow — old in tears!
And those you shed o'er it in childhood, may
Still fall — and fall — for sweet Virginia!

Nor doth a crownèd poet of the age,
Call the sweet spirits from the historic page!
No old familiar dramatist hath spun
This tragic, antique web, to-night — but one,
An unknown author, in a sister land,
Waits, in young fear, the fiat of your hand.

VIRGINIUS

ACT I

SCENE FIRST. — *A Street in Rome.*

[*Enter SERVIUS and CNEIUS*]

SERVIUS. Carbo denied a hearing! CNEIUS. Ay, and Marcellus cast to prison, because he sued a friend one of the Decemvirs for a sum of money he had lent him.

SERVIUS. And Appius resisted not? CNEIUS. That in the first Decemvirate as a god to the people.

CNEIUS. Resisted not! Nay, was most loud in favour of the decree; but then comes Virginius, who interested himself so much in Carbo's affair. He looks a little heated. Is not that Titus speaking to? Stand aside, Master, and listen.

[*Enter VIRGINIUS and TITUS*]

VIRGINIUS. Why did you make him Decemvir, and first Decemvir, too?

TITUS. We had tried him, and found him honest.

VIRGINIUS. And could you not have maintained content? Why try him again to find him dishonest? Knew ye not he was a Patrician, and of the Claudian family?

TITUS. He laid down the Consulate —

VIRGINIUS. Ha! ha! ha! to be elected into the Decemvirate, and he was so; and he laid down his office of Decemvir, to be re-elected into the Decemvirate, and he is so; ay, by Jupiter! and to the exclusion of his late colleagues! Did not Titus Gentilius lay down the Consulate?

TITUS. He did.

VIRGINIUS. Was he not next to Appius in the Decemvirate?

TITUS. He was.

VIRGINIUS. Did you not find him honest?

TITUS. We did find him honest.

VIRGINIUS. As honest as Appius Claudius?

TITUS. Quite as honest.

VIRGINIUS. Quite as honest! And why not re-elect him Decemvir? Most sapient people! You re-elect Appius into the Decemvirate for his honesty, and you thrust Titus out of the Decemvirate — I suppose for his honesty also! Why, Appius was sick of the Decemvirate!

SERVIUS. I never heard him say so.

VIRGINIUS. But he did say so — say so in my hearing, in the presence of the senators, Valerius and Caius Claudius, and I don't know how many others. 'Twas known to the whole body of the Senate — not that he was sick, but that he said so. Yes! yes! he and his colleagues, he said, had done the work of the Republic for a whole year, and it was now but just to grant them a little repose, and appoint others to succeed them.

TITUS. Well, well, we can only say he chang'd his mind.

VIRGINIUS. No, no, we needn't say that neither; as he had laboured in the Decemvirate, perhaps he thought he might as well repose in the Decemvirate.

TITUS. I know not what he thought. He is Decemvir, and we made him so, and cannot help ourselves. Fare you well, Virginius. Come, let's to the Forum.

[*Exeunt TITUS, SERVIUS, and CNEIUS*]

VIRGINIUS [*looking after them and pointing*].

You cannot help yourselves! Indeed, you cannot;

You help'd to put your masters on your backs.

They like their seat, and make you show your paces;

They ride you — sweat you — curb you — lash you — and

You cannot throw them off with all your mettle!

But here comes one, whose share in giving you

To such unsparing riders, touches me
More nearly, for that I've an interest
In proving him a man of fair and most
Erect integrity. Good day, Icilius.

[Enter ICILIUS]

ICILIUS. Worthy Virginius! 'tis an
evil day
For Rome, that gives her more convinc-
ing proof,
The thing she took for hope, is but a
base
And wretched counterfeit! Our new
Decemvirs
Are any thing but friends to justice and
Their country.

VIRGINIUS. You, Icilius, had a hand
In their election. You applied to me
To aid you with my vote, in the
Comitia;

I told you then, and tell you now again,
I am not pleas'd when a Patrician
bends

His head to a Plebeian's girdle! Mark
me!

I'd rather he should stand aloof, and
wear

His shoulder high — especially the
nephew

Of Caius Claudius.

ICILIUS. I would have pledg'd my
life —

VIRGINIUS. 'Twas a high gage, and
men have stak'd a higher

On grounds as poor as yours — their
honour, boy!

Icilius, I have heard it all — your
plans —

The understanding 'twixt the heads of
the people —

Of whom, Icilius, you are reckon'd one,
and

Worthy — and Appius Claudius —
all —

'Twas every jot disclos'd to me.

ICILIUS. By whom?

VIRGINIUS. Sicinius Dentatus.

ICILIUS. He disclos'd it to you!

Sicinius Dentatus is a crabbed man.

VIRGINIUS. Sicinius Dentatus is an
honest man!

There's not a worthier man in Rome!
How now?

Has he deceiv'd me? Do you call him
liar?

My friend! my comrade! old Sicinius,
That has fought in sixscore battles?

ICILIUS. Good Virginius,

Sicinius Dentatus is my friend — the
friend

Of every honest man in Rome — a br
man —

A most brave man. Except yours
Virginius,

I do not know a man I prize above
Sicinius Dentatus — yet he's a crab
man.

VIRGINIUS. Yes, yes; he is a crab
man.

ICILIUS. A man
Who loves too much to wear a jeal
eye.

VIRGINIUS. No, not a whit! — wh
there is double dealing.

You are the best judge of your c
concerns;

Yet, if it please you to communicat
With me upon this subject, come a
see me.

I told you, boy, I favour'd not t
stealing

And winding into place. What he
serves,

An honest man dares challenge 'gai
the world —

But come and see me. Appius Claud
chosen

Decemvir, and his former colleagu
that

Were quite as honest as himself, i
chosen —

No, not so much as nam'd by him
who nam'd

Himself, and his new associates! W
'tis true,

Dog fights with dog, but honesty is
A cur, doth bait his fellow — and e
dogs,

By habit of companionship, abide
In terms of faith and cordiality —

But come and see me. [A sho

ICILIUS. Appius comes!

The people still throng after him w
shouts,

Unwilling to believe their Jupiter
Has mark'd them for his thunder. W

you stay,
And see the homage that they ren

him?

VIRGINIUS. Not I! Stay you; an
as you made him, hail him;

And shout, and wave your hand, and c
long live

Our first and last Decemvir, App
Claudius!

For he is first, and last, and every or
Rome owes you much, Icilius — F

you well —
I shall be glad to see you at my hous

[Exit VIRGINIUS]

ATER APPIUS CLAUDIUS, CLAUDIUS,
SICINIUS DENTATUS, LUCIUS,
TITUS, SERVIUS, MARCUS, and
CITIZENS shouting]

TITUS. Long live our first Decemvir!
Long live Appius Claudius!
Most noble Appius! Appius and the
Decemvirate forever!

[CITIZENS shout]

APPIUS. My countrymen and fellow
citizens,

will deserve your favour.

TITUS. You have deserv'd it,
and will deserve it.

APPIUS. For that end we named
yourself Decemvir.

TITUS. You could not have nam'd a
better man.

DENTATUS. For his own purpose.

[Aside]

APPIUS. Be assur'd, we hold
your power but for your good. Your
gift it was;

and gifts make surest debtors. Fare
you well —

and, for your salutations, pardon me,

and repay you only with an echo —

Long live the worthy citizens of Rome!

[Exit APPIUS, &c., the people
shouting]

DENTATUS. That was a very pretty
echo! — a most soft echo. I never
thought your voices were half so sweet!
Most melodious echo! I'd have you
after make your music before the
Patricians' Palaces; they give most
dear responses! — especially that
Appius Claudius! a most delicate
echo!

TITUS. What means Dentatus?

SERVIUS. He's ever carping — noth-
ing pleases him.

DENTATUS. Oh! yes — you please
— please me mightily, I assure you.
You are noble legislators, take most
special care of your own interest, be-
cause your votes most wisely, too — on
a man who has the wit to get you into the
snare; and withal, have most musical
voices — most musical — if one may
judge by their echo.

TITUS. Why, what quarrel have you
with our choice? Could we have
chosen better? — I say they are ten
the best Decemvirs we have chosen.

DENTATUS. I pray you name them

TITUS. There's Appius Claudius,
our first Decemvir.

DENTATUS. Ay, call him the head;
you are right. Appius Claudius, the
head. Go on!

TITUS. And Quintus Fabius Vibu-
lanus.

DENTATUS. The body, that eats
and drinks while the head thinks.
Call him Appius's stomach. Fill him,
and keep him from cold and indigestion,
and he'll never give Appius the head-
ache! Well? — There's excellent com-
fort in having a good stomach! — Well?

TITUS. There's Cornelius, Marcus
Servilius, Minucius, and Titus Antonius.

DENTATUS. Arms, legs, and thighs!

TITUS. And Marcus Rabuleius.

DENTATUS. He'll do for a hand, and,
as he's a senator, we'll call him the
right hand. We couldn't do less, you
know, for a senator! Well?

LUCIUS. At least, you'll say we did
well in electing Quintus Petilius, Caius
Duellius, and Spurius Oppius, men of
our order! sound men! "known sticklers
for the people" — at least you'll say
we did well in that!

DENTATUS. And who dares say
otherwise? "Well!" one might as
well say "ill" as "well." Well is the
very skirt of commendation; next
neighbour to that mire and gutter,
"ill." "Well," indeed! you acted like
yourselves! Nay, e'en yourselves could
not have acted better! Why, had you
not elected them — Appius would have
gone without his left hand, and each
of his two feet.

SERVIUS. Out! you are dishonest!

DENTATUS. Ha!

SERVIUS. What would content you?

DENTATUS. A post in a hot battle!
Out, you cur! Do you talk to me?

CITIZEN [from behind]. Down
with him, he does nothing but insult
the people.

[The CROWD approach DENTATUS,
threateningly]

[Enter ICILIUS, suddenly]

ICILIUS. Stand back! Who's that
says, down with Sicinius Dentatus?
Down with him! 'Tis what the enemy
could never do; and shall we do it for
them? Who uttered that dishonest
word? Who uttered it, I say? Let
him answer a fitter, though less worthy
mate, Lucius Icilius!

CITIZENS. Stand back, and hear Icilius!

ICILIUS. What! hav'n't I voted for the Decemvirs, and do I snarl at his jests? Has he not a right to jest? the good, honest Sicinius Dentatus, that alone, at the head of the veterans, vanquished the Æqui for you. Has he not a right to jest? For shame! get to your houses! The worthy Dentatus! Cheer for him, if you are Romans! Cheer for him before you go! Cheer for him, I say!

[*Exeunt CITIZENS, shouting*]

DENTATUS. And now, what thanks do you expect from me, Icilius?

ICILIUS. None.

DENTATUS. By Jupiter, young man, had you thus stepped before me in the heat of battle, I would have cloven you down—but I'm obliged to you, Icilius—and hark you! There's a piece of furniture in the house of a friend of mine, that's called Virginus, I think you've set your heart upon—dainty enough—yet not amiss for a young man to covet. Ne'er lose your hopes! He may be brought into the mind to part with it. As to these curs, I question which I value more, their fawnings, or their snarlings.—I thank you, boy! Do you walk this way?—I am glad of it! Come—'Tis a noble Decemvirate you have chosen for us! Come!

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE SECOND. — VIRGINIUS'S House.

[*Enter VIRGINIUS and SERVIA, with some of VIRGINIA'S work in her hand*]

VIRGINIUS. And is this all you have observ'd? I think
There's nothing strange in that. An L
and an I,
Twin'd with a V. Three very innocent
letters
To have bred such mischief in thy brain,
good Servia!

Come, read this riddle to me.

SERVIA. You may laugh,
Virginus, but I will read the riddle right.
The L doth stand for Lucius; and the I,
Icilius; which, I take it, will compose
Lucius Icilius.

VIRGINIUS. So it will, good Servia.

SERVIA. Then, for the V; why, th
is plain Virginia.

VIRGINIUS. And now, what conjur
tion find you here?

SERVIA. What should I find (b
love? The maid's in love,
And it is with Icilius. Look, the wrea
Is made of roses, that entwines th
letters.

VIRGINIUS. And this is all?

SERVIA. And is it not enough?
You'll find this figuring where'er yo
look:

There's not a piece of dainty work sh
does —

Embroidery, or painting — not a task
She finishes, but on the skirt, or borde
In needle-work, or pencil, this, h
secret,

The silly wench betrays.

VIRGINIUS. Go, send her to me —
Stay! Have you spoke to her of it?

SERVIA. I! Not I, indeed; I le
that task to you —

Tho' once I asked her what the lette
meant.

She laugh'd, and drew a scratch acro
them; but

Had scarce done so, ere her fair visag
fell,

For grief that she had spoiled th
cyphers — "and

"A sigh came out, and then almost
tear;

"And she did look as piteous on th
harm

"That she had done, as she had done it
"A thing had sense to feel it." Neve
after

She let me note her at [the] work again
She had good reason!

VIRGINIUS. Send her to me, Servia.

[*Exit SERVIA*]

There's something here, that looks a
it would bring me

Anticipation of my wish. I think
Icilius loves my daughter — nay,
know it;

And such a man I'd challenge for h
husband; —

And only waited, till her forward
spring

Put on, a little more, the genial likenes
Of colouring into summer, ere I sough
To nurse a flower, which, blossoming to
early,

Too early often dies; "but if it spring
"Spontaneous, and, unlooked for, woo
our hand

to tend and cherish it, the growth is
healthful;
and 'twere untimely, as unkind, to
check it." —
ascertain it shortly — soft, she
comes.

[Enter VIRGINIA]

VIRGINIA. Well, father, what's your
will?

VIRGINIUS. I wish'd to see you,
ask you of your tasks — how they
go on —

What your masters say of you —
what last
I did. I hope you never play
the truant?

VIRGINIA. The truant! No, indeed,
Virginius.

VIRGINIUS. I am sure you do not —
kiss me!

VIRGINIA. Oh! my father,
I'm so happy when you're kind to me!
VIRGINIUS. You are so happy when
I'm kind to you!

I not always kind? I never spoke
an angry word to you in all my life,
Virginia! You are happy when I'm
kind!

'Tis strange; and makes me think
you have some reason,
fear I may be otherwise than kind —
so, my girl?

VIRGINIA. Indeed, I did not know
what I was saying to you!

VIRGINIUS. Why, that's worse
and worse! What! when you said
your father's kindness
made you so happy, am I to believe
I were not thinking of him?

VIRGINIA. I —

[Greatly confused]

VIRGINIUS. Go, fetch me
the latest task you did.

[Exit VIRGINIA]

is enough.

The artless speech, like crystal, shows
the thing
would hide, but only covers. 'Tis
enough!

loves, and fears her father may
condemn.

Re-enter VIRGINIA with a painting]

VIRGINIA. Here, Sir.

VIRGINIUS. What's this?

VIRGINIA. 'Tis Homer's history
of great Achilles parting from Briseis.

VIRGINIUS. You have done it well.
The colouring is good,
The figures well design'd. 'Tis very
well! —

Whose face is this you've given to
Achilles?

VIRGINIA. Whose face?

VIRGINIUS. I've seen this face!
Tut! Tut! I know it
As well as I do my own, yet can't be-
think me

Whose face it is!

VIRGINIA. You mean Achilles' face?

VIRGINIUS. Did I not say so? 'Tis
the very face
Of — No! No! Not of him. There's
too much youth

And comeliness; and too much fire, to
suit

The face of Sicinius Dentatus.

VIRGINIA. Oh!

You surely never took it for his face!

VIRGINIUS. Why, no; for now I
look again, I'd swear

You lost the copy ere you drew the head,
And, to requite Achilles for the want
Of his own face, contriv'd to borrow one
From Lucius Icilius. [Enter DENTATUS]

My Dentatus,
I am glad to see you!

[VIRGINIA retires]

DENTATUS. 'Tis not for my news,
then.

VIRGINIUS. Your news! What
news?

DENTATUS. More violence, and
wrong from these new masters of ours,
our noble Decemvirs — these demi-
gods of the good people of Rome!
No man's property is safe from them.
Nay, it appears we hold our wives
and daughters but by the tenure of
their will. Their liking is the law.
The senators themselves, scared at
their audacious rule, withdraw them-
selves to their villas, and leave us to
our fate. There are rumours, also, of
new incursions by the Sabines.

VIRGINIUS. Rome never saw such
days.

DENTATUS. And she'll see worse,
unless I fail in my reckoning. Is that
Virginia? I saw her not before. How
does the fair Virginia? Why, she is
quite a woman. I was just now wish-
ing for a daughter.

VIRGINIUS. A plague, you mean.

DENTATUS. I am sure you should
not say so.

VIRGINIA. Indeed he should not;
and he does not say so,

Dentatus — not that I am not a plague, But that he does not think me one, for all I do to weary him. I am sure, Dentatus,

If to be thought to do well is to do well, There's nothing I do ill; but it is far From that! for few things do I as I ought —

Yet everything is well done with my father,
Dentatus.

VIRGINIUS [*goes to them*]. That's well done, is it not, my friend? [*Aside*] But if you had a daughter, what would you do with her?

DENTATUS. I'd give her to Icilius. I should have been just now torn to pieces, but for his good offices. The gentle citizens, that are driven about by the Decemvirs' Lictors, like a herd of tame oxen, and, with most beast-like docility, only low applauses to them in return, would have done me the kindness to knock my brains out; but the noble Icilius bearded them singly, and railed them into temper. Had I a daughter worthy of such a husband, he should have such a wife, and a Patrician's dower along with her.

VIRGINIUS. I wish to speak with you, Dentatus. Icilius is a young man whom I honour, but so far only as his conduct gives me warrant. He has had, as thou knowest, a principal hand in helping us to our Decemvirs. It may be that he is what I would gladly think him; but I must see him clearly, clearly, Dentatus. "If he has acted "with the remotest understanding, "touching the views of these new "tyrants that we are cursed withal, I "disclaim him as my friend! I cast "him off forever!"

[*Exeunt VIRGINIUS and DENTATUS*]

VIRGINIA. How is it with my heart? I feel as one That has lost every thing, and just before Had nothing left to wish for! He will cast

Icilius off! — I never told it yet; But take of me, thou gentle air, the secret —

And ever after breathe more balmy sweet —

I love Icilius! "Yes, although to thee "I fear to tell it, that hast neither eye "To scan my looks, nor voice to echo me, "Nor e'en an o'er-apt ear to catch my words;

"Yet, sweet invisible confidant, m secret

"Once being thine — I tell thee, and tell thee

"Again — and yet again." I lov Icilius!

He'll cast Icilius off! — not if Icilius Approve his honour. That he'll ov do;

He speaks and looks, and moves a thir of honour,

Or honour never yet spoke — look'd, c mov'd,

Or was a thing of earth. Oh, com Icilius;

Do but appear, and thou art vind cated.

[*Enter ICILIUS*]

ICILIUS. Virginia! sweet Virginia sure I heard

My name pronounc'd. Was it by the Virginia?

Thou dost not answer? Then it wa by thee —

Oh! wouldst thou tell me why tho nam'dst Icilius!

VIRGINIA. My father is incens'd wit thee. Dentatus

Has told him of the new Decemvirate, How they abuse their office. You, k knows,

Have favoured their election, and h fears

May have some understanding of the plans.

ICILIUS. He wrongs me, then!

VIRGINIA. I thank the gods!

ICILIUS. For me!

Virginia? Do you thank the gods fo me?

Your eye is moist — yet that may b for pity;

Your hand doth tremble — that may b for fear;

Your cheek is cover'd o'er with blushes What,

Oh, what can that be for?

VIRGINIA. Icilius, leave me!

ICILIUS. Leave thee, Virginia? Oh a word — a word

Trembles upon my tongue, which, if match

The thought that moves thee now, and thou wilt let me

Pronounce that word, to speak tha thought for thee,

I'll breathe — though I expire in th extacy

Of uttering it.

VIRGINIA. Icilius, will you leave me?
 ICILIUS. Love! Love! Virginia!
 Love! If I have spoke
 thought aright, ne'er be it said
 again!
 heart requires more service than
 the tongue
 at its best, perform. My tongue
 hath serv'd
 hearts — but, lest it should o'er-
 boast itself,
 hearts with but one thought.
 Virginia!
 inia, speak —

[*She covers her face with her hands*]

I have loved thee long:
 much the more extatic my delight,
 and thee mine at length!
 VIRGINIA. My secret's yours.
 p it, and honour it, Icilius.

*Enter VIRGINIUS and DENTATUS
 behind*

VIRGINIUS. Icilius here!
 VIRGINIA. I ask thee now to leave
 me.
 ICILIUS. Leave thee! who leaves a
 treasure he has coveted
 long, and found so newly, ere he
 scans it
 in, and o'er again; and asks and
 answers,
 eats and answers, answers and re-
 peats,
 half-mistrustful, half-assurèd ques-
 tion —
 is it mine indeed?
 VIRGINIA. Indeed! indeed!
 y leave me.
 ICILIUS. I must see thy father first,
 lay my soul before him.
 VIRGINIA. Not to-night.
 ICILIUS. Now worse than ever, dear
 Virginia;
 I endure his doubts; I'll lay my
 soul
 ted before him — win his friendship
 quite,
 ose myself forever!
 [*Going, is met by VIRGINIUS*]
 VIRGINIUS. Stop, Icilius!
 u seest that hand? It is a Roman's,
 boy;
 sworn to liberty — It is the friend
 honour — Dost thou think so?
 ICILIUS. Do I think
 ginus owns that hand?
 VIRGINIUS. Then you'll believe
 as an oath deadly to tyranny,

And is the foe of falsehood! By the
 gods,
 Knew it the lurking place of treason,
 though
 It were a brother's heart, 'twould drag
 the caitiff
 Forth. Dar'st thou take that hand?
 ICILIUS. I dare, Virginius.
 VIRGINIUS. Then take it! Is it
 weak in thy embrace?
 Returns it not thy gripe? Thou wilt
 not hold
 Faster by it, than it will hold by thee!
 I overheard thee say, thou wast resolv'd
 To win my friendship quite. — Thou
 can'st not win
 What thou hast won already! — You
 will stay
 And sup with us to-night?

DENTATUS. To be sure he will!

VIRGINIUS. And, hark you, Sir:
 At your convenient time, appoint a day
 Your friends and kinsmen may confer
 with me —
 There is a bargain I would strike with
 you.
 Come, to the supper-room. Do you
 wait for me,
 To lead Virginia in, or will you do it?
 [*ICILIUS goes eagerly to VIRGINIA*]
 Come on, I say; come on. Your hand,
 Dentatus. [*Exeunt*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT

ACT II

SCENE FIRST. — *A Street.*

[*Enter PUBLIUS and SEXTUS*]

PUBLIUS. This way! We muster at
 the Flaminian gate.
 SEXTUS. Shall we not wait for
 Decius?
 PUBLIUS. No; were he ten times
 Decius. — They'll have already begun
 their march. Come on!

[*Enter NUMITORIUS*]

NUMITORIUS. Do you belong to the
 fourth legion?
 PUBLIUS. We do.
 NUMITORIUS. They are upon their
 march, then.
 PUBLIUS. I told you so. — Come on!
 come on!

[*Exeunt SOLDIERS. Enter LUCIUS*]

LUCIUS. Numitorius, what soldiers were those that just now parted from you?

NUMITORIUS. Soldiers hastening to overtake the army, that's now upon its march.

LUCIUS. 'Tis all confirmed, then; the Sabines are in force upon our borders.

NUMITORIUS. I pray you tell me something new! Know you not the Senate has met, and the Decemvirs have come off triumphant in spite of all opposition?

LUCIUS. Should they have been opposed in such a strait as this?

NUMITORIUS. Aye, should they! They dared not have armed a single citizen without the order of the Senate; which, had they not obtained, the country would have been left naked to the foe, and then they had been forced to make room for more popular magistrates.

LUCIUS. Why, were they not opposed, then?

NUMITORIUS. Did not I tell you they were opposed? Caius Claudius, Appius's own uncle, and Honorius, that noble senator, opposed them; and it was like to go against them, but for the brawling insolence of Spurius Oppius, and the effrontery of the head Decemvir, backed by the young Patricians.

LUCIUS. So they are empowered to take up arms?

NUMITORIUS. To be sure they are; and they have done so. — One body has already march'd, and by this time, no doubt, has come to blows with the enemy. The levy is still proceeding. All the Decemvirs, but Appius, take the field. He remains in Rome to keep good order, that is the violator of all order. Why, where have you been, to have felt no movement of so great and wide a stir? Your brother meets Virginius at his house to-day. — Come with me thither, for you, I know, are bid. — Lucius, there's no huzzaing for your Decemvirs now. — Come on, we have outstaid the hour. [Exeunt]

SCENE SECOND. — VIRGINIUS'S House.

[Enter VIRGINIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS, and others]

VIRGINIUS. Welcome, Icilius! Welcome, friends! Icilius,

I did design to speak with you of feasting

And merriment, but war is now the word;

One that unlovingly keeps time with mirth,

Unless war's own — whene'er the battle's won,

And safe carousing, comrades drink of victory!

ICILIUS. Virginius! have you changed your mind?

VIRGINIUS. My mind?

What mind? How now! Are you tiring the boy, Icilius?

You set your heart so earnestly upon a dish of poor confections, that to burden

you Makes you look blank! I did design to feast you

Together with your friends — The time is chang'd —

The march, the tent, the fight become us now!

ICILIUS. Virginius!

VIRGINIUS. Well?

ICILIUS. Virginius!

VIRGINIUS. How the boy reiterates my name!

ICILIUS. There's not a hope I have, but is the client of Virginius.

VIRGINIUS. Well, well! I only meant to put it off;

We'll have the revel yet! the board shall smoke!

The cup shall sparkle, and the jest shall soar

And mock us from the roof! Will it content you?

Not till the war be done, tho' — Yet, then,

Some tongue, that now needs only war to make

The table ring, may have a tale to tell So petrifying, that it cannot utter it

I'll make all sure, that you may be a guest

At any rate — although you should force'd

To play the host for me, and feed yourself.

Look here,

[Shows a parchment to ICILIUS] How think you? Will it meet the charge?

Will it not do? We want a witness, tho'!

I'll bring one; whom, if you approve, I'll sign

The bond. I'll wait upon you constantly. [Exit]

CIUS. How feel you now, Icilius?
LIUS. Like a man
in the next moment makes, or quite
unmakes.
the intensity of exquisite
sense, my breathing thickens, and
my heart
beats heavily, and with remittent throb,
like to lose its action. — See! my
hope
passes'd! I live! I live!

r VIRGINIUS, conducting VIRGINIA,
with NUMITORIUS]

RGINIUS [*holding his daughter's
hand*]. You are my witnesses,
this young creature I present to
you,
do pronounce — my profitably
cherish'd,
most deservedly belov'd child;
daughter, truly filial — both in
word
act — yet even more in act than
word:
— for the man who seeks to win
her love, —
gin, from whose lips a soul as pure
les, as ere responded to the blessing
sh'd in a parent's kiss. [*Kisses
her*] Icilius!

[ICILIUS rushes towards VIRGINIUS,
and kneels]

are upon your knees, young man,
look up;
lift your hands to heaven — You
will be all
father has been — added unto all
ever would be!

LIUS. All that man should be
roman, I will be to her!

RGINIUS. The oath
gister'd! Didst thou but know,
young man,
fondly I have watch'd her, since the

day
another died, and left me to a charge
double duty bound — how she hath
been

ponder'd thought, by day, my
dream, by night!
prayer, my vow, "my offering, my
praise,"

sweet companion, pupil, tutor,
child! —
I would'st not wonder, that my
drowning eye,
choking utterance, upbraid my
tongue,

That tells thee, she is thine! — Icilius,
I do betroth her to thee; let but the
war
Be done — you shall espouse her.
Friends, a word!

[VIRGINIUS and the rest retire]

ICILIUS. Virginia! my Virginia! I
am all
Dissolv'd — o'erpower'd with the mu-
nificence
Of this auspicious hour — And thou,
nor mov'st,
Nor look'st — nor speak'st — to bless
me with a sign
Of sweet according joy! I love thee,
but
To make thee happy! If to make thee
so
Be bliss denied to me — lo, I release
The gifted hand that I would faster
hold,
Than wretches, bound for death, would
cling to life —
If thou would'st take it back — then
take it back.

VIRGINIA. I take it back — to give
it thee again!

ICILIUS. Oh, help me to a word will
speak my bliss,
Or I am beggar'd — No! there is not
one!

There cannot be; for never man had
bliss

Like mine to name.

VIRGINIA. "Thou dost but beggar
me,

"Icilius, when thou mak'st thyself a
bankrupt;

"Placing a value on me far above
"My real little worth." — I'd help thee
to

A hundred words; each one of which
would far

O'er-rate thy gain, and yet no single one
Rate over high!

ICILIUS. Thou could'st not do it!
No;

Thou could'st not do it! Every term
of worth

Writ down and doubl'd, then the whole
sum'd up,

Would leave with thee a rich remainder
still! —

Pick from each rarer pattern of thy sex
Her rarest charm, till thou hast every
charm

Of soul and body, that can blend in
woman,

I would out-paragon the paragon
With thee!

"VIRGINIA. And if thou would'st,
I'd find thee, for
"Thy paragon, a mate — if that can be
"A mate, which doth transcend the
thing 'tis ta'en
"To match — would make thy paragon
look poor,
"And I would call that so o'ermatching
mate
"Icilius.
"Icilius. No! I will not let thee
win
"On such a theme as this!
"VIRGINIA. Nor will I drop
"The controversy, that the richer makes
me,
"The more I lose.
"Icilius. My sweet Virginia,
"We do but lose and lose, and win and
win;
"Playing for nothing but to lose and
win."
Then let us stop the game — and thus I
stop it. [Kisses her]

[Re-enter VIRGINIUS and the others]

VIRGINIUS. Witness, my friends,
that seal! Observe, it is
A living one! It is Icilius' seal;
And stamp'd upon as true and fair a
bond —
Tho' it receive the impress blushingly —
As ever signet kiss'd! Are all content?
Speak, else! She is thy free affianc'd
wife,
Thou art her free affianc'd husband!
Come,
We have o'erdrawn our time — Fare-
well, Virginia;
Thy future husband for a time must be
Bellona's. To thy tasks again, my
child;
Be thou the bride of study for a time.
Farewell!

VIRGINIA. My father!

VIRGINIUS. May the gods protect
thee.

VIRGINIA. My father!

VIRGINIUS. Does the blood forsake
thy cheek?

Come to my arms once more! Remem-
ber, girl,
The first and foremost debt a Roman
owes,
Is to his country; and it must be paid,
If need be, with his life. — Why, how
you hold me!
Icilius, take her from me! Ho!
Within!
Within, there! Servia!

[Enter SERVIA]

Look to your child!

Come, boy.

ICILIUS. Farewell, Virginia.

VIRGINIUS. Take her in!

VIRGINIA. The gods be with th
my Icilius! — Father,

The gods be with thee — and Icilius

VIRGINIUS. I swear, a battle mi
be fought and won

In half the time! Now, once for
farewell;

Your sword and buckler, boy! T
foe! the foe!

Does he not tread on Roman groun
Come on!

Come on, charge on him! drive h
back! or die! [Exe

SCENE THIRD. — APPIUS'S House

[Enter APPIUS]

APPIUS. It was a triumph;
achieving which,
O'erpaid the risk was run — and t
was great.

They have made trial of their streng
and learn'd

Its value from defeat. The Sen
knows

Its masters now; and the Decemvirs
To make its reign eternal, only want

Its own decree, which little pains
win.

Ere this, the foe has, for his mad
vasion,

Been paid with chastisement. "I
tir'd within

"His proper limits, leisure waits up
us

"To help us to the recompence, decr

"To our noble daring, who have set o
selves

"In such high seats, as at our feet ar

"The wealth, and power, and dignity
Rome

"In absolute subjection! Tyranny!

"How godlike is thy port! Thou giv
and tak'st,

"And ask'st no other leave, than w
thy own

"Imperial will accords. — Jove does
more!"

Now, Claudius —

[Enter CLAUDIUS]

CLAUDIUS. We have suffer'd a
feat!

APPIUS. What! The Decemvirs t

CLAUDIUS. The soldiers fight only half a heart. "The other half is on, and cares not which side proves the winner."
 DENTATUS. Then decimate them. Traitors! Recreants!
 We shall have them at our very doors!
 We lost ground, my Claudius?
 CLAUDIUS. None, except we've retrac'd in fame. We strove to teach our enemy their road lay backwards, but they would not turn their faces for us. Each follows his former line.

[Enter MARCUS]

CLAUDIUS. What news?
 MARCUS. The Æquus presses upon us. Rumours are afloat of new disasters, which the common cry, sure, still multiplies and swells.
 DENTATUS. Over-busy, crabbed veteran, sit up and down among the people making plans his theme of laughter. Laught he stints may reflect you in an odious light, lower the Decemvirate.
 CLAUDIUS. A dungeon do good service to him! Once within, struggling were easy! We must stop his mouth — wholesome food — or liquor" — Where was he last you heard him?
 MARCUS. In the Forum.
 CLAUDIUS. So! past service, is he not? Some way near the city of him. Come, we'll hear him, answer him, and silence him! 'Tis well.
 He log barks forth his spleen; it puts us on guard against his bite. Come, to the Forum!
 [Exeunt]

SCENE FOURTH. — *The Forum.*

[Enter DENTATUS, TITUS, SERVIUS, and CITIZENS]

CLAUDIUS. What's to be done?
 DENTATUS. We'll be undone — to be done.

SERVIUS. We'll do away with the Decemvirate.

DENTATUS. You'll do away with the Decemvirate? — The Decemvirate will do away with you! You'll do away with yourselves! Do nothing. — The enemy will do away with both of you. In another month, a Roman will be a stranger in Rome. A fine pass we are come to, Masters!

TITUS. But something must be done.

DENTATUS. Why, what would you have? You shout and clap your hands, as if it were a victory you heard of; and yet you cry — Something must be done! Truly, I know not what that something is, unless it be to make you General. How say you, Masters?

SERVIUS. We'd follow any man that knew how to lead us, and would rid us of our foes, and the Decemvirate together.

DENTATUS. You made these Decemvirs! You are strangely discontented with your own work! And you are overcunning workmen, too. — You put your materials so firmly together, there's no such thing as taking them asunder! What you build, you build — except it be for your own good. — There you are bunglers at your craft. Ha! ha! ha! I cannot but laugh to think how you toiled, and strained, and sweated, to rear the stones of the building one above another, when I see the sorry faces you make at it!

TITUS. But tell us the news again.

DENTATUS. Is it so good? Does it so please you? Then prick your ears again, and listen. — We have been beaten again — beaten back on our own soil. Rome has seen its haughty masters fly before chastisement, like slaves — returning cries for blows — and all this of your Decemvirs, gentlemen.

1ST CITIZEN. Huzza for it again!

[*The PEOPLE shout*]

2D CITIZEN. Hush! Appius comes.

DENTATUS. And do you care for that? You that were, just now, within a stride of taking him and his colleagues by the throat? You'll do away with the Decemvirs, will you? And let but one of them appear, you dare not, for your life, but keep your spleen within your teeth! Listen to me, now! I'll speak the more for Appius —

[Enter APPIUS, CLAUDIUS, and MARCUS,
preceded by LICTORS]

I say, to the eternal infamy of Rome, the foe has chased her sons, like hares, on their own soil, where they should prey like lions — and so they would, had they not keepers to tame them.

APPIUS. What's that you are saying to the people, Sicinius Dentatus?

DENTATUS. I am regaling them with the news.

APPIUS. The news?

DENTATUS. Ay, the news — the newest that can be had; and the more novel, because unlooked for. Who ever thought to see the eagle in the talons of the kite?

APPIUS. It is not well done in you, Dentatus, to chafe a sore. It makes it rankle. If your surgery has learned no better, it should keep its hands to itself! You have very little to do, to busy yourself after this fashion.

DENTATUS. I busy myself as I like, Appius Claudius.

APPIUS. I know you do, when you labour to spread disaffection among the people, and bring the Decemvirs into contempt.

DENTATUS. The Decemvirs bring themselves into contempt.

APPIUS. Ha! dare you say so?

DENTATUS [closer to him]. Dare! I have dared cry, "Come on!" to a cohort of bearded warriors — Is it thy smooth face should appal me? Dare! it never yet flurried me to use my arm — Shall I not, think you, be at my ease, when I but wag my tongue? Dare, indeed!

[Laughs contemptuously]

APPIUS. Your grey hairs should keep company with honester speech!

DENTATUS. Shall I show you, Appius, the company they are wont to keep? Look here! and here! [Uncovering his forehead, and showing scars] These are the vouchers of honest deeds — such is the speech with which my grey hairs keep company. I tell you to your teeth, the Decemvirs bring themselves into contempt.

APPIUS. What, are they not serving their country at the head of her armies?

DENTATUS. They'd serve her better in the body of her armies! I'd name for thee a hundred centurions would make better generals. A common soldier of a year's active service would take his measures better. Generals!

Our generals were wont to teach how to win battles. — Tactics! changed — Your generals instruct how to lose them.

APPIUS. Do you see my lictors?

DENTATUS. There are twelve of the

APPIUS. What, if I bid them see thee?

DENTATUS. They'd blush to do

APPIUS. Why now, Dentatus, I gin to know you;

I fancied you a man that lov'd to ve His causeless anger in an under breath And speak it in the ear — and only th When there was safety! Such a o you'll own,

Is dangerous; and, to be trusted as A friend or foe, unworthy. But I se You rail to faces. — Have you not much

Respect for Appius, as to take him b The hand; when he confesses you ha some

Pretence to quarrel with his colleagu plans,

And find fault with himself? Whi yet you'll own,

May quite as well be kindly do Dentatus,

As harshly. — Had you only to mys Declar'd your discontents, the more y had rail'd

The more I should have thank'd you.

DENTATUS. Had I thought —

APPIUS. And have you been ca paigning then so long,

And prosperously? and mistrust y Sicinius,

That a young scarless soldier, like n self,

Would listen to your tutoring? S now,

How much you have mistaken n Dentatus,

In a word — Can you assist the g erals?

And will you?

DENTATUS. I have all the will, but as

For the ability —

APPIUS. Tut! tut! Dentatus,

You vex me now! This coyness sits r well on you.

You know, as well as I, you have much

Ability as will. I would not think y A man that lov'd to find fault, but find fault!

Surely, the evil you complain of, you Would lend a hand to remedy! S now,

fairly put to you — what say you?
 DENTATUS. Appius!
 I may use me as you please!
 APPIUS. And that will be,
 you deserve! I'll send you, as my
 Legate,
 to the army. [*Shout from the PEOPLE*]
 Do you hear your friends, Den-
 tatus?
 O lucky omen, that! Away! away!
 Prepare your house — prepare for set-
 ting out.
 Hurry your credentials. — Minutes,
 now,
 as high as hours! Assist my col-
 leagues with
 counsel; — if their plans displease
 you, why
 reject them! change them! utterly
 reject them!
 if you meet obstruction — notice
 me,
 I will push it by. — There now!
 Your hand! —
 Al! Away! All the success attend
 you,
 Appius wishes you!
 DENTATUS. Success is from
 gods, whose hand soe'er it pleases
 them
 send it by. — I know not what
 success
 Appius' wish they send; — but
 this I know, —
 a soldier; and, as a soldier, I
 bound to serve. All the success I
 ask,
 that which benefits my country,
 Appius. [*Exit DENTATUS*]
 APPIUS. [*Aside*] You have serv'd her
 overlong! —
 for our causes. [*Ascends Tribunal*]
 CLAUDIUS. [*To MARCUS*] Do you see
 the drift of this?
 MARCUS. I cannot guess it.
 CLAUDIUS. Nor I.
 APPIUS. [*To a PLEBEIAN*] Are you the
 suitor in this cause?
 PLEBEIAN. Noble Appius, if there's
 law in Rome
 against a man most injur'd, to that law
 against yon proud Patrician I appeal.
 APPIUS. No more of that, I say!
 Because he's rich
 great, you call him proud! 'Tis
 not unlike,
 because you're poor and mean, you call
 yourself
 proud. — Relate your story; and, so
 please you,

Spare epithets!

PLEBEIAN. Grant me a minute's
 pause,
 I shall begin.

[*VIRGINIA at this moment crosses
 the Stage with her NURSE, and
 is met by NUMITORIUS, who
 holds her in conversation;
 APPIUS rivets his eyes upon her*]

NUMITORIUS. You have heard the
 news?

VIRGINIA. What news? dear uncle!

NUMITORIUS. Step
 Aside with me, I'll tell you.

[*Takes her a little farther from the
 Tribunal*]

APPIUS. Can it be
 A mortal that I look upon?

VIRGINIA. They are safe!
 I thank the gods!

APPIUS. Her eyes look up to heaven,
 Like something kindred to it — rather
 made
 To send their glances down, and fill the
 earth

With worship and with gratulation —
 What

A thrill runs up and down my veins;
 and all throughout me!

PLEBEIAN. Now, most noble Ap-
 pius! —

APPIUS. Stop;
 Put off the cause, I cannot hear it now!
 Attend to-morrow! An oppressive
 closeness

Allows me not to breathe — Lictors!
 make clear

The ground about the Rostrum!

[*Descends and approaches CLAUDIUS
 with precipitation*]

Claudius! Claudius! —

Marcus, go you and summon my
 physician

To be at home before me. [*Exit
 MARCUS*] Claudius!

Claudius! there! there!

VIRGINIA. You send a messenger
 to-night?

APPIUS. Paint me that smile! I
 never saw a smile

Till now. My Claudius, is she not a
 wonder?

I know not whether in the state of girl-
 hood

Or womanhood to call her. — 'Twixt the
 two

She stands, as that were loth to lose her,
 this

To win her most impatient. The young
year,
Trembling and blushing 'midst the striv-
ing kisses
Of parting spring, and meeting summer,
seems

Her only parallel!

NUMITORIUS. 'Tis well! I'll send
Your father word of this. But have you
not

A message to Icilius?

APPIUS. Mark you, Claudius?
There is a blush! — I must possess her.

VIRGINIA. Tell him
I think upon him. — Farewell, Numi-
torius! [*Exit with SERVIA*]

NUMITORIUS. Farewell, Virginia.

CLAUDIUS. Master, will you tell me
The name of that young maiden?

NUMITORIUS. She is called
Virginia, daughter of Virginius;
A Roman citizen, and a centurion
In the army.

CLAUDIUS. Thank you; she is very
like
The daughter of a friend of mine. Fare-
well.

NUMITORIUS. Farewell! [*Exit*]
APPIUS. I burn, my Claudius! brain
and heart — There's not

A fibre in my body but's on fire!
With what a gait she moves! Such was
not Hebe,

Or Jupiter had sooner lost his heaven,
Than changed his cup-bearer — a step
like that

The rapture glowing clouds might well
bear up,
And never take for human! Find me,
Claudius,

Some way to compass the possession of
her.

CLAUDIUS. 'Tis difficult. — Her
father's of repute;
The highest of his class.

APPIUS. I guessed it! Friends
Are ever friends, except when friends are
needed.

CLAUDIUS. Nay, Appius! —

APPIUS. If thou can'st not give me
hope,
Be dumb!

CLAUDIUS. A female agent may be
used
With some success.

APPIUS. How? How?

CLAUDIUS. To tamper with

That woman that attends her.

APPIUS. Set about it.

CLAUDIUS. Could she but be in-
duc'd to help you to

A single meeting with her.

APPIUS. Claudius! Claudius!
Effect but that!

CLAUDIUS. I'll instantly about it.

APPIUS. Spare not my gold — nor
stop at promises.

I will fulfil them fast as thou can'st
make them.

To purchase such a draught of extacy
I'd drain a kingdom! — Set about it,
Claudius!

Away! I will not eat, nor drink, nor
sleep,

Until I hear from thee!

CLAUDIUS. Depend upon me!

APPIUS. I do, my Claudius, for my
life — my life!

[*Exeunt severally*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT III

SCENE FIRST. — APPIUS'S House.

[*Enter APPIUS*]

APPIUS. It is not love, if what I've
felt before

And call'd by such a name, be love — a
thing

That took its turn — that I could enter-
tain,

Put off, or humour — 'tis some other
thing;

Or, if the same, why in some other
state —

Or I am not the same — or it hath
found

Some other part of sensibility
More quick, whereon to try its power
and there

Expend it all! Now, Claudius, your
success?

[*Enter CLAUDIUS*]

CLAUDIUS. Nothing would do, yet
nothing left undone!

She was not to be purchas'd.

APPIUS. Did she guess —

CLAUDIUS. She could not,
So guarded was my agent; who de-
scrib'd you

A man of power, of noble family,
And regal fortune — one that ask'd not
what

His pleasures cost — no further made
disclosure.

APPIUS. And did it nothing move
her, Claudius?

CLAUDIUS. Nothing.
 more my agent urg'd, the more the
 shrunk
 wither'd hag grew callous; further
 press'd,
 with more urgent importuning, ire
 scorn, in imprecations and invectives
 ed upon the monster (as she call'd
 him)
 would pollute her child, compell'd
 my advocate
 rop the suit she saw was hopeless.
 APPIUS. Now
 I a friend indeed!
 APPIUS. Has Appius need
 search for such a friend, and Claudius
 by him?
 APPIUS. Friends ever are provision-
 ally friends —
 ds for so far — Friends just to
 such a point,
 then "farewell!" friends with an
 understanding —
 ould the road be pretty safe — the
 sea
 over-rough, and so on — friends of
 ifs
 but — no friends! — Oh, could I
 find the man
 ld be a simple, thorough-going
 friend!
 APPIUS. I thought you had one,
 Appius.
 APPIUS. So thought Appius,
 Appius thought upon a test of
 friendship,
 ears he would not give unto himself,
 d he be Appius' friend.
 APPIUS. Then Appius has
 uer friend than Appius is to Appius.
 ive that test!
 APPIUS. What! you'd remove her
 father
 that Icilius whom you told me of?
 APPIUS. Count it as done.
 APPIUS. My Claudius, is it true?
 I believe it? art thou such a friend,
 when I look'd for thee to stop and
 leave me,
 d thee keeping with me, step by
 step;
 even in thy loving eagerness
 triding me? I do not want thee,
 Claudius,
 soil thy hand with their plebeian
 blood.
 APPIUS. What would'st thou,
 then?
 APPIUS. I was left guardian to
 thee —

CLAUDIUS. Thou wast.
 APPIUS. Amongst the various prop-
 erty
 Thy father left, were many female
 slaves.
 APPIUS. Well?
 APPIUS. It were easy for thee, (were
 it not?)
 To forge a tale that one of them con-
 fess'd
 She had sold a female infant (and of
 course
 Thy slave) unto Virginus' wife, who
 pass'd it
 Upon Virginus as his daughter, which
 Supposititious offspring is this same
 Virginia?
 APPIUS. I conceive you.
 APPIUS. To induce
 The woman to confirm your tale, would
 ask
 But small persuasion. Is it done?
 APPIUS. This hour.
 I know the school, my Appius, where
 Virginia
 Pursues her studies; thither I'll repair
 And seize her as my slave at once. Do
 thou
 Repair to thy tribunal, whither, should
 Her friends molest me in the attempt,
 I'll bring her,
 And plead my cause before thee.
 APPIUS. Claudius! Claudius!
 How shall I pay thee? Oh, thou noble
 friend!
 Power, fortune, life, whate'er belongs to
 Appius,
 Reckon as thine! Away, away, my
 Claudius! [*Exeunt severally*]

SCENE SECOND. — *A Street in Rome.*

[*Enter LUCIUS, meeting TITUS, SERVIUS,
 and CNEIUS*]

LUCIUS. Well, Masters, any news of
 Sicinius Dentatus from the camp, how
 he was received by the Decemvirs?

TITUS. He was received well by the
 Decemvirs.

CNEIUS. It wasn't then for the love
 they bear him.

TITUS. But they expect he'll help
 them to return the cuffs they have
 gotten from the enemy.

SERVIUS. Do you wish for a vic-
 tory?

LUCIUS. Yes, if Dentatus wins it.
 'Tis to our credit, Masters — He's one
 of us.

SERVIUS. And is not Spurius Oppius one of us?

LUCIUS. He is; but he is in league with the Patricians — "that is, the patrician Decemvirs." He is but half a Plebeian, and that is the worse half. — "The better half he threw away when he became half a Patrician." I never lik'd your half-and-half gentry; they generally combine the bad of both kinds, without the good of either.

SERVIUS. Well, we shall have news presently. Icilius, our late tribune, has just arrived with despatches from the camp. I met him passing through the Forum, and asked him what news he brought? He answered, none; but added, we might look for news of another kind than what we had been lately accustomed to hear.

[A shriek without]

CNEIUS. What's that?

TITUS. Look yonder, Masters! See!

SERVIUS. 'Tis Appius's client, dragging a young woman along with him.

TITUS. Let us stand by each other, Masters, and prevent him.

[Enter CLAUDIUS, dragging along VIRGINIA, followed by SERVIA, and others]

SERVIA. Help! help! help!

LUCIUS. Let go your hold!

CLAUDIUS. Stand by! She is my slave!

SERVIA. His slave! Help! help!

His slave? —

He looks more like a slave than she!

Good Masters!

Protect the daughter of Virginius!

LUCIUS. Release the maid.

TITUS. Forbear this violence.

CLAUDIUS. I call for the assistance of the laws;

She is my slave.

SERVIA. She is my daughter, Masters,

My foster-daughter; and her mother was

A free-born woman — and her father is A citizen, a Roman — good Virginius, As I said before — Virginius, the Centurion,

Whom all of you must know. — Help! help! I say,

You see she cannot speak to help herself; Speak for her, Masters — help her, if you're men!

TITUS. Let go your hold.

CLAUDIUS. Obstruct me at your peril.

LUCIUS. We'll make you, if you w
not.

CLAUDIUS. Let me pass.

SERVIUS. Let go your hold, on
more.

CLAUDIUS. Good Masters! p
tience! —

Hear me, I say — She is my slave —
wish not

To use this violence, my friends; b
may not

A master seize upon his slave? — Ma
way,

Or such of you as are dissatisfied,
Repair with me to the Decemvir.

Come,

I only want my right.

TITUS. Come on, then!

SERVIUS. Ay,
To the Decemvir!

SERVIA. Run, run for Numitorius
alarm our neighbours! — Call o
Icilius's friends! — I shall go ma
Help! help! help! [Exeun

SCENE THIRD. — *The Forum.*

[Enter APPIUS, preceded by LICTORS]

APPIUS. Will he succeed? — Will
attempt it? — Will he

Go through with it? — [Looks out] M
sign — I almost wish

He had not undertaken it; yet wish
More than I wish for life, he may a
complete

What he has undertaken. Oh! t
pause

That precedes action! It is vacancy
That o'erweighs action's substance

What I fear

Is, that his courage can't withstand h
tears;

That will be sure to try and succo
her.

Pointing, as 'twere, to every charm, an
pleading

With melting eloquence. I hear a sou
As of approaching clamour — and t
rush

Of distant feet — He comes! I mu
prepare

For his reception.

[Ascends the Tribune]

[CLAUDIUS enters, still holding VIRGINIA, followed by SERVIA, WOMEN, and CITIZENS]

CLAUDIUS. Do not press upon me
Here's the Decemvir — he will satis
you,

ner a master has a right or not
ze his slave when he finds her.
VIA. She is no slave
ine! She never was a slave!
hou slave!
all her by that name — Ay!
reaten me!
a free-born maid, and not a slave,
ver was a free-born maid in Rome!
ou shall dearly answer for it!
US. Peace!
quarrel's this? Speak, those who
re aggriev'd.

[Enter NUMITORIUS]

NUMITORIUS. Where is Virginia?
Wherefore do you hold
maiden's hand?

CLAUDIUS. Who asks the question?
NUMITORIUS. I! Her uncle Numi-
porius!

CLAUDIUS. Numitorius, you think
yourself her uncle — Numitorius,
ood of yours flows in her veins, to
ive you
tle you would claim. Most noble
ppius!

NUMITORIUS. I sit here for justice — as I think
o, attend not to the clamour of
an, who calls himself this damsel's
ncle.

CLAUDIUS. My property — was born beneath
ther's roof, whose slave her mother
as,

(as I can establish past dispute)
er an infant to Virginius' wife,
never had a child, and heavily
v'd her barrenness. My slave I
ave found

seiz'd — as who that finds his own
no matter

ong so ever miss'd) should fear to
ake it?

y oppose my claim, they may pro-
uce

counter-proofs, and bring the
ause to trial!

ll they prove mine own is not mine
wn —

ndertaking somewhat perilous)

own I shall retain — yet giving
hem,

d they demand it, what security
please, for re-producing her.

US. Why, that
d be but reasonable.

NUMITORIUS. Reasonable!
ius! —

[With much vehemence — recollects
himself]

He's but a mask upon the face
Of some more powerful contriver. —

[Aside] Appius,
My niece's father is from Rome, thou
know'st,

Serving his country. Is it not unjust,
In the absence of a citizen, to suffer
His right to his own child to be dis-
puted?

Grant us a day to fetch Virginius,
That he himself may answer this most
foul

And novel suit — Meanwhile to me
belongs

The custody of the maid — her uncle's
house

Can better answer for her honour than
The house of Claudius. 'Tis the law of
Rome,

Before a final sentence, the defendant
In his possession is not to sustain
Disturbance from the plaintiff.

TITUS. A just law.

SERVIVS. And a most reasonable de-
mand.

ALL THE CITIZENS. Ay! Ay! Ay!

APPIUS. Silence, you Citizens; will
you restrain

Your tongues, and give your magistrate
permission

To speak? The law is just — most
reasonable —

I fram'd that law myself — I will protect
That law!

"TITUS. Most noble Appius!

"SERVIVS. A most just decree!

"ALL THE CITIZENS. Ay! Ay!

"APPIUS. Will you be silent? Will
you please to wait

"For my decree, you most untractable
"And boisterous citizens! I do repeat
it,"

I framed that law myself, and will pro-
tect it.

But are you, Numitorius, here de-
fendant?

That title, none but the reputed father
Of the young woman has a right to —

How

Can I commit to thee what may appear
The plaintiff's property; and, if not his,
Still is not thine? I'll give thee till to-
morrow

Ere I pass a final judgment — But the
girl

Remains with Claudius, who shall bind
himself

In such security as you require,
To re-produce her at the claim of him

Who calls her daughter. This is my
decree.

NUMITORIUS. A foul decree. —
Shame! shame!

SERVIUS. Aye, a most foul decree.

CNEIUS. A villainous decree.

SERVIUS. Most villainous.

SERVIA. Good Citizens, what do you
with our weapons,

When you should use your own? Your
hands! — your hands! —

He shall not take her from us.

Gather round her,

And if he touch her, be it to his cost;

And if ye see him touch her, never more

Expect from us your titles — never more

Be husbands, brothers, lovers, at our

mouths,

Or any thing that doth imply the name

Of men — except such men as men

should blush for.

APPIUS. Command your wives and
daughters, Citizens,

They quit the Forum.

SERVIA. They shall not command us,
That care not to protect us.

APPIUS. Take the girl,

If she is yours.

CLAUDIUS. Stand by.

VIRGINIA. Oh, help me! help me!

[Enter ICILIUS]

ICILIUS. Virginia's voice! Virginia!

[Rushes to her]

VIRGINIA. Oh, Icilius!

[Falls fainting in his arms]

ICILIUS. Take her, good Numitorius.

APPIUS. You had better

Withdraw, Icilius; the affair is judged.

CLAUDIUS. I claim my slave.

ICILIUS. Stand back, thou double
slave!

Touch her, and I will tear thee, limb
from limb,

Before thy master's face. — She is my
wife,

My life, my heart, my heart's blood. —
Touch her

With but a look —

APPIUS. My Lictors, there, advance!
See that Icilius quits the Forum. —

Claudius,
Secure your slave.

ICILIUS. Lictors, a moment pause,
For your own sakes. Do not mistake
these arms;

Think not the strength of any common
man

Is that they feel. They serve a charmed
frame,

The which a power pervades, that ten
times trebles

The natural energy of each single nerve,

To sweep you down as reeds.

APPIUS. Obey my orders!

ICILIUS. Appius! before I quit the
Forum, let me

Address a word to you.

APPIUS. Be brief, then!

ICILIUS. Is't not enough you have
depriv'd us, Appius,

Of the two strongest bulwarks to our
liberties,

Our tribunes, and our privilege of appeal
To the assembly of the people? Can I

not

The honour of the Roman maids be
safe?

Thou know'st this virgin is betroth'd
to me,

Wife of my hope — Thou shalt not cross
my hope,

And I retain my life — attempt
not! —

I stand among my fellow-citizens,

His fellow-soldiers hem Virginius round

Both men and gods are on our side; but
grant

I stood alone, with nought but virtue
to love

To hearten me — alone would I defeat
The execution of thy infamous

Decree! I'll quit the Forum now, but
not

Alone — my love! — my wife! my friends!
born maid —

The virgin standard of my pride and
manhood,

"Of peerless motto! — rich, and fresh
and shining,

"And of device most rare and
glorious" —

I'll bear off safe with me — unstain'd —
untouch'd!

APPIUS. Your duty, Lictors! —
Claudius, look to your right.

ICILIUS. True citizens!

TITUS. Down with the traitor!

SERVIUS. Down with him — slay
him!

[The LICTORS and CLAUDIUS are
driven back; CLAUDIUS takes
refuge at APPIUS's feet, who has
descended, and throws up his
arms as a signal to both parties
to desist — whereupon the people
retire a little]

APPIUS. So, friends! we thank you
that you don't deprive us
Of every thing; but leave your magistrates,

At least their persons, sacred — the
decrees,

ms, you value as you value straws,
in like manner break them.
Wherefore stop,
you have gone so far? You
night, methinks,
all have kill'd my client at my feet,
treaten him with death before my
face!

Claudius! I perceive Icilius'
him; —
bours to restore the tribuneship
eans of a sedition. We'll not give
him
east pretence of quarrel. We shall
rait
ius's arrival till to-morrow.
riends take care to notice him —
he camp's

our hours' journey from the city.
I'll
orrow, then, let me prevail with
ou
old up something of your right, and
t
irl remain at liberty.

AUDIUS. If they
ee security for her appearance,
content.

US. I'll be your security.

VIUS. And I.

CIZENS. We'll all be your security.
[*They hold up their hands*]

US. My friends,
ellow-citizens, I thank you; but
ve your kindness for to-morrow,
riends,
audius still persist — To-day, I
ope,
ll remain content with my security,
hat of Numitorius, for the maid's
rance.

US. See she do appear! — and
ome
r'd to pay the laws more reverence,
shall surely see that they receive

[*Exeunt APPIUS, CLAUDIUS, and
LICTORS*]

US. Look up! look up! my
weet Virginia,
up! look up! you will see none but
riends.

at such eyes should e'er meet other
rospects!

GINIA. Icilius! Uncle! lead me
ome! Icilius,
did not think to take a slave to
rife! —

US. I thought, and think to wed
free-born maid;

And thou, and thou alone, art she,
Virginia!

VIRGINIA. I feel as I were so — I do
not think

I am his slave! Virginius not my
father!

Virginius, my dear father, not my
father!

It cannot be; my life must come from
him;

For, make him not my father, it will
go

From me. — I could not live, an he were
not

My father.

ICILIUS. Dear Virginia, calm thy
thoughts —

But who shall warn Virginius?

NUMITORIUS. I've ta'en care
Of that; no sooner heard I of this claim,
Than I despatch'd thy brother Lucius,
Together with my son, to bring Vir-
ginius,

With all the speed they could; and
caution'd them

(As he is something over quick of
temper,

And might snatch justice, rather than
sue for it,)

To evade communication of the cause,
And merely say his presence was re-
quired,

Till we should have him with us.
Come, Virginia;

Thy uncle's house shall guard thee, till
thou find'st

Within thy father's arms a citadel,
Whence Claudius cannot take thee.

ICILIUS. He shall take
A thousand lives first.

TITUS. Ay, ten thousand lives.

ICILIUS. Hear you, Virginia! Do
you hear your friends?

VIRGINIA. Let him take my life first,
I am content

To be his slave then — if I am his slave.

ICILIUS. Thou art a free-born
Roman maid, Virginia;

All Rome doth know thee so, Virginia —
All Rome will see thee so.

CITIZENS. We will! we will!
ICILIUS. You'll meet us here to-
morrow?

CITIZENS. All! all!
ICILIUS. Cease not to clamour 'gainst
this outrage. Tell it

In every corner of the city; and
Let no man call himself a son of Rome,

Who stands aloof when tyranny assails
Her fairest daughter. Come, Virginia,

'Tis not a private, but a common wrong;

'Tis every father's, lover's, freeman's
cause;

To-morrow! fellow citizens, to-morrow!
CITIZENS. To-morrow!

[*Exeunt severally*]

SCENE FOURTH. — *The Camp.*

[*Enter S. OPIUS and Q. F. VIBULANUS*]

OPIUS. Has he set out?

VIBULANUS. He has, my Oppius,
And never to return! His guard's in-
structed

To take good care of him. There's not a
man

But's ten times sold to us, and of our
wishes

Fully possess'd. Dentatus will no more
Obstruct us in our plans. He did not
like

The site of our encampment. He will
find

At least the air of it was wholesome.

OPIUS. What

Report are they instructed to bring
back?

VIBULANUS. They fell into an am-
bush. — He was slain.

OPIUS. But should the truth, by
any means, come out.

VIBULANUS. Imprison them, and
secretly despatch them,

Or ope the dungeon doors, and let
them 'scape.

OPIUS. I should prefer the latter
method.

VIBULANUS. Well,

That be our choice. But when it is
determined

To spill blood otherwise than as it may
Be spill'd, to hesitate about some drops

Is weakness, may be fatal. — Come, my
friend,

Let us be seen about the camp, and
ready,

With most admiring ear, to catch the
tidings,

Will be the wonder of all ears but ours.
Here's one anticipates us!

[*Enter MARCUS*]

Well, your news?

MARCUS. Dentatus is no more! but
he has dearly sold his life. The matter
has been reported as you directed. By
few it is received with credence — by
many with doubt; while some bold
spirits stop not at muttering, but
loudly speak suspicion of foul play. A

party that we met, a mile beyond
lines, no sooner heard our story,
they set off to bring the body to
camp. Others have followed
Fabius, we have your gage for safe

VIBULANUS. You have. — Com-
us show ourselves. — Guilt hi

And we must wear the port of inno-
That more than half way meets a

— Come. [E

SCENE FIFTH. — *A Mountainous*
— *The body of DENTATUS discov-*
ered on a bier. — Soldiers mourning
on Trumpets

[*Enter VIRGINIUS and SOLDIER*]

VIRGINIUS. Where is Dent

Where is the gallant soldier?

Ah, Comrade! Comrade! warm
warm! So lately

Gone, when I would have given
world, only

To say farewell to thee, or even ge-
A parting look! O gallant, g-

soldier,

The god of war might sure have s-
a head

Grown grey in serving him! My
old comrade!

The father of the field! Thy silver
Other anointing should receive,

what

Their masters' blood could furnish
1ST SOLDIER. There has been tr-

ery here!

VIRGINIUS. What!

1ST SOLDIER. The slain are all our
None of the bodies are stripp'd —

are all Romans. There is not the s-
est trace of an enemy's retreat

now I remember, they made a su-
halt when we came in sight of the

the foot of the mountain. — M-
you not, too, with what confused

they told their story, directed us
hurried on to the camp?

VIRGINIUS. Revenge! The De-
virs! Aye, the Decemvirs!

For every drop of blood thou shalt
ten,

Dentatus!

LUCIUS. What, ho! Virgi-
ninius!

VIRGINIUS. Here! here!

[*Enter LUCIUS*]

LUCIUS. 'Tis well you're found
ginius!

VRGINIUS. What makes you from the city? Look!

LUCIUS, what a sight you've come to witness.

brave old comrade! Honest Sicinius!

inius Dentatus, that true son of Rome,

whose white locks the mother look'd more proudly

an on the raven ones of her youngest and

st hopeful sons, is nothing now but this,

the sign and token of himself!"

Look, comrades,

are the foes have slain him! Not a trace

ny other — not a body stripp'd —

father has been murdered — We'll revenge him

sons! Take up the body! Bear it to

camp; and as you move your solemn march,

umb — or if you speak, be it but a word;

be that word — Revenge!

[THE SOLDIERS *bear off the body.* —

VIRGINIUS, *following, is stopped by LUCIUS*]

LUCIUS. Virginius!

VIRGINIUS. I did not mind thee, Lucius!

common things make common things forgot.

thou a message for me, Lucius? Well!

stay and hear it — but be brief; my heart

ows my poor Dentatus.

LUCIUS. You are wanted home.

VIRGINIUS. On what account?

LUCIUS. On your arrival

ll learn.

VIRGINIUS. How! is it something can't be told

nce? Speak out, boy! Ha! your looks are loaded

a matter — Is't so heavy that your tongue

not unburden them? Your brother left

camp on duty yesterday — hath ought

pen'd to him? Did he arrive in safety?

safe? Is he well?

LUCIUS. He is both safe and well.

VIRGINIUS. What then? What then? Tell me the matter, Lucius.

LUCIUS. I have said

It shall be told you.

VIRGINIUS. Shall! I stay not for That shall; unless it be so close at hand, It stop me not a moment. — 'Tis too long A coming. Fare you well, my Lucius.

LUCIUS. Stay, Virginius. — Hear me, then, with patience.

VIRGINIUS. Well, I am patient.

LUCIUS. Your Virginia —

VIRGINIUS. Stop, my Lucius, I am cold in every member of my frame!

If 'tis prophetic, Lucius, of thy news; Give me such token as her tomb would, Lucius —

I'll bear it better. — Silence.

LUCIUS. You are still —

VIRGINIUS. I thank thee, Jupiter! I am still a father!

LUCIUS. You are, Virginius, yet —

VIRGINIUS. What, is she sick?

LUCIUS. No.

VIRGINIUS. Neither dead nor sick? All well? No harm?

Nothing amiss? Each guarded quarter safe,

That fear may lay him down and sleep and yet

This sounding the alarm! I swear thou tell'st

A story strangely. — Out with't! I have patience

For any thing, since my Virginia lives, And lives in health!

LUCIUS. You are requir'd in Rome, To answer a most novel suit.

VIRGINIUS. Whose suit?

LUCIUS. The suit of Caius Claudius

VIRGINIUS. Claudius!

LUCIUS. Him that's client

To Appius Claudius, the Decemvir.

VIRGINIUS. What!

That pander! Ha! Virginia! you appear

To couple them. What makes my fair Virginia

In company with Claudius? Innocence

Beside lasciviousness! His suit! What suit? —

Answer me quickly! — Quickly! lest suspense,

Beyond what patience can endure, coercing,

Drive reason from his seat!

LUCIUS. He has claim'd Virginia.

VIRGINIUS. Claim'd her! Claim'd her!

On what pretence?

LUCIUS. He says she is the child Of a slave of his, who sold her to thy wife.

VIRGINIUS. Go on, you see I'm calm.

LUCIUS. He seiz'd her in The school, and dragg'd her to the Forum, where Appius was giving judgment.

VIRGINIUS. Dragged her to The Forum! Well? — I told you, Lucius,

I would be patient.

LUCIUS. Numitorius there confronted him!

VIRGINIUS. Did he not strike him dead?

True, true, I know it was in presence of The Decemvir — Oh! had I confronted him!

Well! well! The issue — Well! — O'er-leap all else,

And light upon the issue! Where is she?

LUCIUS. I was despatch'd to fetch thee, ere I could learn.

VIRGINIUS. The claim of Claudius — Appius's client — Ha!

I see the master cloud — this ragged one, That lowers before, moves only in subservience

To the ascendant of the other — Jove With its own mischief, break it, and disperse it,

And that be all the ruin! Patience! Prudence!

Nay, prudence, but no patience. — Come! a slave,

Dragg'd through the streets in open day! my child!

My daughter! my fair daughter, in the eyes

Of Rome! Oh! I'll be patient. Come! The essence

Of my best blood in the free common ear Condemn'd as vile! Oh! I'll be patient.

Come, Oh, they shall wonder. — I will be so patient! [Exeunt]

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT IV

SCENE FIRST. — NUMITORIUS's House.

[VIRGINIA discovered, supported by SERVIA]

VIRGINIA. Is he not yet arriv'd? Will he not come?

SERVIA. He surely will.

VIRGINIA. He surely will! Mo surely

He had arriv'd already, had he known How he is wanted — "They have miss him, Servia!

"Don't tell me, but I know they have or surely

"We had not now been looking him." Where's

My uncle?

SERVIA. Finding you had fall asleep

After such watching, he went forth hear

If there were any tidings of Virginius. He's here.

[Enter NUMITORIUS. — VIRGINIA looks at him inquisitively, for some time]

VIRGINIA. Not come! not come! am sure of it!

He will not come! Do you not think he'll come?

Will not my father come? What think you, uncle?

Speak to me, speak — Oh, give me answers,

Rather than what looks utter.

NUMITORIUS. Be compos'd!

I hope he'll come!

VIRGINIA. A little while ago

You were sure of it — from certainty hope

Is a poor step; you hope he'll come — One hope,

One little hope to face a thousand fears!

"Do you not know he'll come? O uncle, wherefore

"Do you not know he'll come? Had been you,

"I had made sure of it.

"NUMITORIUS. All has been done

"That could be done.

VIRGINIA. "Poor all that does little!

"One would imagine little needs be done

"To bring a father to the succour of "His child!" 'Tis near the time!

NUMITORIUS. It is indeed!

VIRGINIA. Must I go forth with you? Must I again

Be dragg'd along by Claudius as his slave,

And none again to succour me? Icilius! Icilius!

Does your true betroth'd walk Call on you, and you hear not? Must Icilius!

Am I to be your wife or Claudius' slave? Where — where are you, Icilius?

[Enter ICILIUS]

ICILIUS. My Virginia!
It's to be done, my friend? 'tis
almost time.

[To NUMITORIUS]

VIRGINIA. I hear what you are say-
ing — it is time —

who could have believed it, that
Icilius

could ever say 'twas time to yield me
to

another's claim." — And will you give
me up?

you devise no means to keep me
from him?

and we not fly?

[ICILIUS looks earnestly at NUMI-
TORIUS, who fixes his eyes stead-
fastly on the ground; ICILIUS
droops his head]

! — Your pledge

to be redeem'd, although it cost you
your

inia.

VIRGINIUS [without]. Is she here?

VIRGINIA. Ah!

[Shrieks and rushes into her father's
arms, who enters at the moment]

VIRGINIUS. My child! my child!

VIRGINIA. I am! I feel I am! I know
I am!

father! my dear father! "I de-
spair'd

seeing you!" You're come! and
come in time.

oh! how much the more in time,
when hope

given you up. "Oh! welcome,
welcome foot,

whose wish'd step is heard when least
expected!"

VIRGINIUS. Brother! Icilius! thank
you! thank you — All

been communicated to me. Ay!
would they take thee from me?

Let them try it!

've ta'en your measures well — I
scarce could pass

ing, so was I check'd by loving hands
to serve me. Hands with hearts

in them!
thou art Claudius' slave? And if

thou art, surely not thy father! Blister'd
villain!

have warn'd our neighbours, have
you not, to attend

witnesses? To be sure you have. A
fool

To ask the question! Dragg'd along
the streets, too!

'Twas very kind in him to go himself
And fetch thee — such an honour should

not pass

Without acknowledgment. I shall re-
turn it

In full! In full!

NUMITORIUS. Pray you be prudent,
brother.

VIRGINIA. Dear father, be advis'd —
Will you not, father?

VIRGINIUS. I never saw you look so
like your mother

In all my life!

VIRGINIA. You'll be advis'd, dear
father?

VIRGINIUS. It was her soul — her
soul, that play'd just then

About the features of her child, and lit
them

Into the likeness of her own. When first
She plac'd thee in my arms — I recollect

it

As a thing of yesterday! — she wish'd,
she said,

That it had been a man. I answer'd
her,

It was the mother of a race of men,
And paid her for thee with a kiss. Her

lips

Are cold now — could they but be
warm'd again,

How they would clamour for thee!

VIRGINIA. My dear father,
You do not answer me! Will you not

be advis'd?

VIRGINIUS. I will not take him by
the throat and strangle him!

But I could do it! I could do it! Fear
not:

I will not strike while any head I love
Is in the way. It is not now a time

To tell thee — but, would'st thou be-
lieve it! — honest

Sicinius Dentatus has been murder'd by
them.

ICILIUS. Murder'd!

NUMITORIUS. Dentatus murder'd!

VIRGINIA. Oh! how much

Have we to fear.

VIRGINIUS. We have the less to fear.
I spread the news at every step — A fire

Is kindled, that will blaze at but a
breath

Into the fiercest flame!

NUMITORIUS. 'Tis time. Let's haste
To the Forum.

VIRGINIUS. Let the Forum wait for
us!

Put on no show of fear, when villainy

Would wrestle with you! It can keep
its feet
Only with cowards! I shall walk along
Slowly and calmly, with my daughter
thus
In my hand: though with another kind
of gripe
Than that which Claudius gave her.
Well, I say,
I'll walk along thus, in the eyes of Rome.
Go you before, and what appeal soe'er
You please, make you to rouse up
friends. For me,
I shall be mute — my eloquence is
here —
Her tears — her youth — her innocence
— her beauty.
If orators like these can't move the
heart,
Tongues surely may be dumb.
ICILIUS. A thousand hearts
Have spoke already in her cause!
VIRGINIUS. Come on!
Fear not! it is your father's grasp you
feel.
Oh, he'll be strong as never man was,
that
Will take thee from it. Come, Vir-
ginia;
We trust our cause to Rome and to the
gods! [Exeunt]

SCENE SECOND. — *The Forum.*

[Enter APPIUS and LICTORS]

APPIUS. See you keep back the
people! Use your fasces
With firmer hands, or hearts. Your
hands are firm
Enough, would but your hearts perform
their office,
"And leave your hands at liberty, not
hang
"Upon them with unseemly fears and
clamours!"
Look to it! "Time! hadst thou the
theme that I have
"For speed, thou would'st not move
this cripple's gait:
"But there's no urging thee, and thou
wast ever
"Dull fellow traveller to young Im-
patience,
"Dragging him back upon the road he
pants
"To run, but cannot find without thee."

[Enter MARCUS]

Well?

MARCUS. News has arriv'd, that
speaks as if Dentatus

Was murder'd by the order of yo
colleagues!
There's not a face I meet but lowers w
it:
The streets are fill'd with throng
groups, that, as
You pass, grow silent, and look sul
round on you,
Then fall again to converse.
APPIUS. 'Tis ill tim'd.
MARCUS. What say you, Appius?
APPIUS. Murder's ill tim'd, I say,
Happen when 'twill; but now is most
tim'd,
When Rome is in a ferment, on accou
Of Claudius, and this girl he calls
slave;
"For come when evil will, or how it w
"All's laid to our account!" Look o
and see
If Claudius be approaching yet.

[Exit MARCUS]

"My wish,
"Like an officious friend, comes out
time
"To tell me of success. I had rather
"It had miscarried — they run hi
enough;
"They wanted not this squall on squ
to raise them
"Above their present swell — the wa
run high
"Enough, through which we steer:
but such a haven,
"If won, can never be too dearly won
MARCUS [entering]. Claudius is he

[Enter CLAUDIUS]

APPIUS. Well, Claudius, are t
forces
At hand?
CLAUDIUS. They are, and time
too; the people
Are in unwonted ferment.
APPIUS. I have heard
Word has arriv'd of old Dentatus' deat
Which, as I hear, and wonder not to he
it,
The mutinous citizens lay to our
count.
CLAUDIUS. That's bad enoug
yet —
APPIUS. Ha! what's worse?
CLAUDIUS. 'Tis best
At once to speak what you must learn
last,
Yet last of all would learn.
APPIUS. Virginus!
CLAUDIUS. Yes!
He has arriv'd in Rome.

MARCUS. They are coming, Appius.
CLAUDIUS. Fly, Marcus, hurry down
the forces! [*Exit MARCUS*] Ap-
pius,
not o'erwhelm'd!
APPIUS. There's something awes me
at
thought of looking on her father!
CLAUDIUS. Look
at her, my Appius! Fix your gaze
upon
treasures of her beauty, nor avert it
they are thine. Haste! Your tri-
bunal! Haste!

[*APPIUS ascends the Tribunal*
Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS,
LUCIUS, VIRGINIUS leading his
Daughter, SERVIA, and CITI-
ZENS.—A dead silence prevails]

VIRGINIUS. Does no one speak? I
am defendant here.
Hence my opponent? Fit opponent
plead a cause too foul for speech!
What brow
less, gives front to this most
valiant cause,
tries its prowess 'gainst the honour
of
; yet lacks the wit to know, that
they
cast off shame, should likewise cast
off fear —
d on the verge o' the combat wants
the nerve
stammer forth the signal?"
APPIUS. You had better,
nius, wear another kind of carriage;
is not of the fashion that will serve
you.
VIRGINIUS. The fashion, Appius!
Appius Claudius, tell me
fashion it becomes a man to speak
in,
se property in his own child — the
offspring
s own body, near to him as is
hand, his arm — yea, nearer —
closer far,
to his heart — I say, who has his
property
ch a thing, the very self of himself,
uted; and I'll speak so, Appius
Claudius;
peak so — Pray you, tutor me!
APPIUS. Stand forth,
dius! If you lay claim to any
interest
the question now before us, speak!
If not,
g on some other cause.

CLAUDIUS. Most noble Appius —
VIRGINIUS. And are you the man
That claims my daughter for his slave?
— Look at me,
And I will give her to thee.
CLAUDIUS. She is mine, then:
Do I not look at you?
VIRGINIUS. Your eye does, truly,
But not your soul. — I see it through
your eye,
Shifting and shrinking — turning every
way
To shun me. "You surprise me, that
your eye,
"So long the bully of its master, knows
not
"To put a proper face upon a lie,
"But gives the port of impudence to
falsehood,
"When it would pass it off for truth."
Your soul
Dares as soon show its face to me! —
Go on,
I had forgot; the fashion of my speech
May not please Appius Claudius.
CLAUDIUS. I demand
Protection of the Decemvir!
APPIUS. You shall have it.
VIRGINIUS. Doubtless!
APPIUS. Keep back the people, Lic-
tors! What's
Your plea? You say the girl's your
slave — Produce
Your proofs.
CLAUDIUS. My proof is here, which,
if they can,
Let them confront. The mother of the
girl —
[*VIRGINIUS, stepping forward to speak,*
is withheld by NUMITORIUS]
NUMITORIUS. Hold, brother! Hear
them out, or suffer me
To speak.
VIRGINIUS. Man, I must speak, or
else go mad!
And if I do go mad, what then will hold
me
From speaking? "Were't not better,
brother, think you,
"To speak and not go mad, than to go
mad,
"And then to speak?" She was thy
sister, too!
Well, well, speak thou. — I'll try, and
if I can,
Be silent. [*Retires*]
NUMITORIUS. Will she swear she is
her child?
VIRGINIUS [*starting forward*]. To be
sure she will — a most wise question
that!

Is she not his slave? Will his tongue lie
for him —
Or his hand steal — or the finger of his
hand

Beckon, or point, or shut, or open for
him?

To ask him if she'll swear! — Will she
walk or run,

Sing, dance, or wag her head; do any
thing

That is most easy done? She'll as soon
swear!

What mockery it is to have one's life
In jeopardy by such a bare-fac'd trick!

Is it to be endur'd? I do protest
Against her oath!

APPIUS. No law in Rome, Virginius,
Seconds you. If she swear the girl's her
child,

The evidence is good, unless confronted
By better evidence. Look you to that,
Virginius. I shall take the woman's
oath.

VIRGINIA. Icilius!

ICILIUS. Fear not, love; a thousand
oaths

Will answer her.

APPIUS. *[To the SLAVE]*. You swear
the girl's your child,

And that you sold her to Virginius' wife,
Who pass'd her for her own — Is that
your oath?

SLAVE *[coming round to the front of the
Tribunal]*. It is my oath.

APPIUS. Your answer now, Vir-
ginius.

VIRGINIUS. Here it is!

[Brings VIRGINIA forward]

Is this the daughter of a slave? I know
'Tis not with men, as shrubs and trees,
that by

The shoot you know the rank and order
of

The stem. Yet who from such a stem
would look

For such a shoot? My witnesses are
these —

The relatives and friends of Numitoria,
Who saw her, ere Virginia's birth, sus-
tain

The burden which a mother bears, nor
feels

The weight, with longing for the sight
of it.

Here are the ears that listen'd to her
sighs

In nature's hour of labour, which sub-
sides

In the embrace of joy — the hands, that
when

The day first look'd upon the infant
face,

And never look'd so pleased, help
them up to it,

And bless'd her for a blessing — Her
the eyes

That saw her lying at the generous
And sympathetic fount, that at her

Sent forth a stream of liquid living pea-
To cherish her enamell'd veins. The l

Is most unfruitful, then, that takes the
flower —

The very flower our bed connubi-
grew —

To prove its barrenness! Speak for m
friends;

Have I not spoke the truth?

WOMEN AND CITIZENS. You hav
Virginus.

APPIUS. Silence! keep silence ther
— No more of that!

You're very ready for a tumult, Citizen
[Troops appear behind]

Lictors, make way to let these troop
advance!

We have had a taste of your forbea-
ance, masters,

And wish not for another.

VIRGINIUS. Troops in the Forum

APPIUS. Virginus, have you spok

VIRGINIUS. If you have heard me,
I have; if not, I'll speak again.

APPIUS. You need not,
Virginus; I have evidence to give,

Which, should you speak a hundre
times again,

Would make your pleading vain.

VIRGINIUS. Your hand, Virginia!

Stand close to me. *[Aside]*

APPIUS. My conscience will not l
me

Be silent. 'Tis notorious to you all,

That Claudius' father, at his deat
declar'd me

The guardian of his son — This cher
has long

Been known to me. I know the girl
not

Virginus' daughter.

VIRGINIUS. Join your friends, Iciliu
And leave Virginia to my care. *[Aside]*

"APPIUS. The justice
"I should have done my client, un

quir'd,
"Now cited by him, how shall I r
fuse?"

VIRGINIUS. Don't tremble, gir
don't tremble. *[Aside]*

APPIUS. Virginus,
I feel for you; but, though you were m
father,

majesty of justice should be sacred —
 dius must take Virginia home with him!

RGINIUS. And if he must, I should advise him, Appius, take her home in time, before his guardian

plete the violation, which his eyesady have begun. [*Turning to CITIZENS*] Friends! fellow citizens!

not on Claudius — Look on your Decemvir!

the master claims Virginia! tongues that told him she was not my child

these — the costly charms he cannot purchase,

pt by making her the slave of Claudius,

lient, his purveyor, that caters for pleasures — markets for him — picks, and scents,

tastes, that he may banquet — serves him up

sensual feast, and is not now sham'd,

e open, common street, before your eyes —

ating your daughters' and your matrons' cheeks

blushes they ne'er thought to meet — to help him

he honour of a Roman maid! my child!

now clings to me, as you see, as if second Tarquin had already coil'd arms around her. Look upon her, Romans!

end her! succour her! see her not polluted

re her father's eyes! — He is but one!

her from Appius and his Lictors, while

is unstain'd — Your hands! your hands! your hands!

RIZENS. They are yours, Virginius.

PIUS. Keep the people back —

ort my Lictors, soldiers! Seize the girl,

drive the people back.

LIUS. Down with the slaves!

[*The people make a show of resistance, but, upon the advancing of the SOLDIERS, retreat, and leave ICILIUS, VIRGINIUS and his Daughter, &c., in the hands of APPIUS and his party*]

rted! — Cowards! Traitors! "Let me free

"But for a moment! I relied on you; "Had I relied upon myself alone "I had kept them still at bay! I kneel to you —

"Let me but loose a moment, if 'tis only "To rush upon your swords!"

VIRGINIUS. Icilius, peace! You see how 'tis, we are deserted, left Alone by our friends, surrounded by our enemies,

Nerveless and helpless.

APPIUS. Away with him! ICILIUS. Virginia! Tyrant! My Virginia!

APPIUS. Away with him! [*ICILIUS is borne off*]

Separate them, Lictors!

VIRGINIUS. Let them forbear awhile, I pray you, Appius;

It is not very easy. Though her arms Are tender, yet the hold is strong, by which

She grasps me, Appius. Forcing them will hurt them,

They'll soon unclasp themselves. Wait but a little —

You know you're sure of her!

APPIUS. I have not time To idle with thee, give her to my Lictors.

VIRGINIUS. Appius, I pray you, wait! If she's not

My child, she hath been like a child to me

For fifteen years. If I am not her father I have been like a father to her, Appius,

For even such a time. "They that have liv'd

"So long a time together, in so near "And dear society, may be allow'd

"A little time for parting." Let me take

The maid aside, I pray you, and confer A moment with her nurse; perhaps she'll give me

Some token, will unloose a tie, so twin'd And knotted round my heart, that if you break it

My heart breaks with it.

APPIUS. Have your wish. Be brief! Lictors, look to them.

VIRGINIA. Do you go from me! Do you leave! Father! Father!

VIRGINIUS. No, my child; No, my Virginia — come along with me.

VIRGINIA. Will you not leave me? Will you take me with you?

Will you take me home again? Oh, bless you, bless you!

My father! my dear father! Art thou not

My father?

[VIRGINIUS, perfectly at a loss what to do, looks anxiously around the Forum; at length his eye falls on a butcher's stall, with a knife upon it]

VIRGINIUS. This way, my child —
No, no! I am not going
To leave thee, my Virginia! I'll not
leave thee.

APPIUS. "Keep back the people,
soldiers! Let them not
"Approach Virginius! Keep the people
back!"

[VIRGINIUS secures the knife]
Well, have you done?

VIRGINIUS. Short time for converse,
Appius;
But I have.

APPIUS. I hope you are satisfied.
VIRGINIUS. I am —

I am — that she is my daughter!

APPIUS. Take her, Lictors!
[VIRGINIA shrieks and falls half
dead upon her father's shoulder]

VIRGINIUS. Another moment, pray
you. Bear with me
A little — 'Tis my last embrace.
'Twon't try

Your patience beyond bearing, if you're
a man!

Lengthen it as I may, I cannot make it
Long! My dear child! My dear Vir-
ginia!

[Kissing her]
There is one only way to save thine
honour —
'Tis this! —

[Stabs her and draws out the knife.
ICILIUS breaks from the soldiers
that held him, and catches her]

Lo! Appius! with this innocent blood,
I do devote thee to th' infernal gods!
Make way there!

APPIUS. Stop him! Seize him!

VIRGINIUS. If they dare
To tempt the desperate weapon that is
madden'd

With drinking my daughter's blood,
why, let them: Thus

It rushes in amongst them. Way there!
Way! [Exit through the SOLDIERS]

"[Enter HONORIUS and VALERIUS]

"HONORIUS. What tumult's this? —

"The fair Virginia

"Kill'd by her father's hand, to save her
from

"The lust of Appius Claudius? Most
foul cause,

"That makes so dark a deed look fair!

"APPIUS. Remove

"The body, Lictors.

"ICILIUS. At the peril of
"Their lives! Death is abroad, at wor
and most

"In earnest when with such a feat as th
"He opens his exploits!

"APPIUS. Obey me, slaves!

"HONORIUS. Defend the body, fre
men. There's a spark

"Remaining still, which, though n
strong enough

"To light it up with its own beauteo
life,

"May yet rekindle liberty, and save

"Expiring Rome!

"CITIZENS. It shall not be removed

"APPIUS. Seize it, I say!

"VALERIUS. Back, slaves! Gi
place to freemen!

"[A tumult ensues; the people d

"prive the LICTORS of the
"fascies, and drive them, wi

"the SOLDIERS, with APPI

"CLAUDIUS, &c., off the Stag

"then return shouting]

"ICILIUS. Ay, shout, and shout:
far more glorious cause

"Call'd for your voices, and you had n
then

"The breath to whisper. How that e
had thank'd you,

"Had you as tender been of the jewel

"Its precious sense, as of the emp
casket!

"HONORIUS. A litter, Citizens, to li
the body,

"And bear it through the streets;
spectacle

"Will fill all eyes with tears, all hear
with fire!

"ICILIUS. No hand but mine sh
touch it: I will be

"Its living bier.

"HONORIUS. Icilius, listen to me!

"Thou art not now thyself, and knowe
not

"There is a sweeter strain than that
grief —

"Revenge, that drowns it. Suffer us
bear

"Thy bride along the streets; a secon
but

"Unstain'd Lucretia, buying, with h
blood,

"The life of Rome and freedom!

"ICILIUS. Rome and freedom!

"There is your ransom! such a cost
one —

"Oh, you are dear, to be so dearly wor
"[Exeunt]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

ACT V

SCENE FIRST. — *A Street.*

[*Enter APPIUS*]

APPIUS. I do abjure all further
 league with them:
 I have most basely yielded up their
 power,
 I compromis'd their glory. Had
 they died
 in their high seats, they had liv'd demi-
 gods;
 now they live to die like basest
 men!"
 I am gone, life follows! Well! 'tis
 well we know
 the worst! The worst? — The worst
 yet to come,
 if I err not, hither speeds a mes-
 senger
 whose heel it treads upon.

VIBULANUS, *hastily, and other DE-
 CEMVIRS, with MARCUS*]

VIBULANUS. Honorius and Valerius
 are elected
 to the Consulate. — Virginius is made
 Tribune —

APPIUS. No doubt they'd fill their
 offices, when ours
 are laid so poorly down. — You have
 acted wisely!

VIBULANUS. Who could resist Vir-
 ginius, raving at
 the head of the revolted troops, with
 all
 commons up in arms? Waste not
 dear time!

Look to your safety, Appius. 'Tis
 resolv'd
 to cite you instantly before the
 Consuls.

APPIUS. Look to my safety, say
 you? You would bid
 man that's tumbling from a preci-
 pice
 hundred fathoms high, and midway
 down,
 look to his safety! What has he to
 match at?

— E'en so much have I.

VIBULANUS. Withdraw awhile
 from Rome. We shall recall you with
 applause
 and honours.

APPIUS. Yes! you saw me on the
 brink —

"Beheld it giving way beneath my
 feet —

"And saw me tottering o'er the hideous
 leap,

"Whose sight sent round the brain with
 madd'ning whirl,

"With but a twig to stay me, which you
 cut,

"Because it was your friend that hung
 by it —

"Most kindly.

"VIBULANUS. Nay," employ the
 present time

In looking to your safety — "that se-
 cur'd,

"Reproach us as you will."

APPIUS. I am in your hands,

Lead me which way you please.

ICILIUS [*without*]. Hold! Stand!

[*Enter ICILIUS, with NUMITORIUS and
 LICTORS*]

Did I not tell you 'twas the tyrant?
 Look,

Was I not right? I felt that he was
 present,

Ere mine eye told it me. — You are our
 prisoner.

APPIUS. Your prisoner! On what
 pretence, Icilius?

ICILIUS. Inquire of your audacious
 deeds, "that laid

"Your country's liberties prostrate."
 Not to speak

Of any private wrong — but to reply
 Touching a private wrong — inquire of
 poor

Virginius, tottering between despair
 And madness, as he seeks the home,
 where once

He found a daughter!

APPIUS. I demand due time

To make up my defence.

ICILIUS. Demand due time!

Appius! — Assign the cause why you
 denied

A Roman maid, of free condition,

Her liberty provisionally, while

Her plea remain'd unjudg'd. No
 answer, Appius?

Lictors, lay hold upon him — to prison
 with him!

Look to him well. To prison with the
 tyrant!

[*Exeunt APPIUS and LICTORS on
 one side, ICILIUS and NUMI-
 TORIUS on the other*]

VIBULANUS. Let all his friends, that
 their own safety prize,

Solicit straight for his enlargement;
 doff
 Their marks of station, and to the vulgar
 eye
 Disguise it with the garb of mourning:
 'twill
 Conciliate the crowd. — We know them
 well:
 But humour them, they are water soon
 as fire! *[Exeunt severally]*

SCENE SECOND. — VIRGINIUS'S House

[Enter LUCIUS and SERVIA]

LUCIUS. Is he not yet come home?
 SERVIA. Not since her death.
 I dread his coming home, good Lucius.
 LUCIUS. A step! 'Tis Numitorius
 and Virginus.
 SERVIA. Gods! how he looks! —
 See, Lucius, how he looks!

[Enter VIRGINIUS, attended by NUMITORIUS and others]

VIRGINIUS. 'Tis ease! 'tis ease! I
 am content! 'Tis peace,
 'Tis anything that is most soft and
 quiet.
 And after such a dream! — I want my
 daughter;
 Send me my daughter!
 NUMITORIUS. Yes, his reason's gone.
 Scarce had he come in sight of his once
 sweet
 And happy home, ere with a cry he
 fell
 As one struck dead. — When to himself
 he came,
 We found him as you see. How is it,
 brother?

VIRGINIUS. How should it be but
 well? Our cause is good.
 Think you Rome will stand by, and see
 a man
 Robb'd of his child? We are bad
 enough, but yet
 They should not so mistake us. "We
 are slaves,"
 "But not yet monsters." — Call my
 daughter to me.
 What keeps her thus? I never stept
 within
 The threshold yet, without her meeting
 me
 With a kiss. She's very long a-coming.
 Call her!
 NUMITORIUS. Icilius comes! See,
 my Icilius, see!

[Enter ICILIUS]

VIRGINIUS. Come, come, 'm
 ready. Brother, you and he
 Go on before: I'll bring her after you
 ICILIUS. Ha!
 NUMITORIUS. My Icilius, what
 sight is there!
 VIRGINIUS' reason is a wreck, so strip
 And broken by wave and wind,
 scarce
 Would know it was the gallant bark
 saw
 Riding so late in safety!
 ICILIUS *[taking VIRGINIUS's hand]*
 Father! Father!
 That art no more a father!
 VIRGINIUS. Ha! what wet
 Is this upon my hand? A tear, boy!
 For shame! Is that the weapon
 would guard
 Your bride with? First essay w
 steel can do!
 NUMITORIUS. Not a tear has ble
 his eye since her death.
 "No wonder."
 "The fever of his brain, that now bu
 out,
 "Has drunk the source of sorro
 torrents dry.
 "ICILIUS. You would not have
 otherwise? 'Twas fit
 "The bolt, that struck the sole rema
 ing branch,
 "And blasted it, should set the tr
 on fire!"
 NUMITORIUS. If we could make
 weep —
 ICILIUS. I have that will make h
 If aught will do it. 'Tis her u
 'Twas that
 Which first drew tears from me.
 fetch it. But
 I cannot think you wise, to wake a r
 Who's at the mercy of a temp
 Better
 You suffer him to sleep it through.
[Exit ICILIUS]
 VIRGINIUS. Gather your friends
 gether: tell them of
 Dentatus' murder. Screw the choro
 rage
 To the topmost pitch. Mine own is
 mine own! *[Lays hand on sword]*
 That's strange enough. Why does
 not dispute
 My right to my own flesh, and tell
 heart
 Its blood is not its own? He might
 well. *[Lays hand on sword]*
 But I want my child.

[Enter LUCIUS]

Justice will be defeated!
 Who says that?
 in the face of the gods! She is
 immutable,
 and immortal! And
 though all
 guilty globe should blaze, she will
 ring up
 above the fire, and soar above the
 smould'ring pile,
 not a downy feather ruffled by
 greenness!
 He is not himself!
 That new
 passion comes to tell us to our teeth,
 only mock'd ourselves to think the
 days
 freedom past?
 The friends of Appius
 the people with solicitations.
 idle crowd, that change with every
 change,
 to doubt and soften; "doubtless
 at the stones,
 went to vent their griefs to, turn
 to flesh,
 wh'd by their own calamity."
 moment
 lost, a friend is lost. Appear
 among
 friends, or lose them!
 Lucius, you
 n, and watch Virginus.
 [Exit, followed by all but LUCIUS
 and SERVIA]
 You remember,
 you, nurse?
 What, Virginus?
 That she nurs'd
 child herself. "Inquire among
 our gossips,
 of them saw it; and, with such
 them
 an avouch the fact, without delay,
 air to the Forum." Will she come
 or not?
 I myself! — She will not dare! —
 h, when
 y Virginia dare — Virginia!
 voice, or nothing, answers me?
 a sound so fine — there's nothing
 ves
 it and silence. "Such a slender
 ae
 heard, when I have talk'd with
 er in fancy!
 phantom sound!" Aha! She is
 ot here!

They told me she was here: they have
 deceiv'd me;
 And Appius was not made to give her up,
 But keeps her, and effects his wicked
 purpose,
 While I stand talking here, and ask you
 if
 My daughter is my daughter! Though
 a legion
 Sentries that brothel, which he calls his
 palace,
 I'd tear her from him!
 LUCIUS. Hold, Virginus! Stay!
 Appius is now in prison.
 VIRGINIUS. With my daughter!
 He has secur'd her there! Ha! has he
 so?
 Gay office for a dungeon! Hold me not,
 Or I will dash you down, and spoil you
 for
 My keeper. My Virginia, struggle with
 him!
 Appal him with thy shrieks; ne'er
 faint, ne'er faint!
 I am coming to thee! I am coming to
 thee!

[Rushes out, followed by
 LUCIUS SERVIA, and others]

SCENE THIRD. — A Dungeon.

[APPIUS discovered]

From the palace to the
 dungeon is a road
 Trod oft, not oft retrud. What hope
 have I
 To pace it back again? I know of
 none.
 I am as one that's dead! "The
 dungeon, that
 "Encloses fallen greatness, may as well
 "Be called its tomb." I am as much
 the carcass
 Of myself, as if the string were taken
 from
 My neck. Their hands long for the
 office. Oh,
 'Tis worth the half of a Plebeian's life
 To get his greasy fingers on the throat
 Of a Patrician! But I'll balk them.
 Come!
 Appius shall have an executioner
 No less illustrious than himself.

[He is on the point of swallowing
 poison, when VIBULANUS enters]

Who's there?

VIBULANUS. Your friend!

APPIUS. My Vibulanus!

VIBULANUS. Appius, what
Was that you hid in such confusion as
I enter'd?

APPIUS. 'Tis a draught for life,
which, swallow'd,
She relishes so richly, that she cares not
If she ne'er drink again! Here's health
to you!

VIBULANUS. Not out of such a cup
as that, my Appius.

"Despair, that bids you drink it, as the
cure

"Of canker'd life, but lies to you, and
turns

"Your eyes from hope, that even now
stands ready

"With outstretch'd arms, to rush to
your embrace."

Your friends are busy for you with your
foes —

Your foes become your friends. Where-
e'er a frown

Appears against you, nothing's spar'd to
make

The wearer doff it, and put up a smile
In its stead. "Your colleague Oppius
is in prison.

"Your client, too. Their harm's your
safety: it

"Distracts the appetite o' the dogs.
They drop

"The morsel they took up before, as
soon

"As a new one's thrown to them."

APPIUS. Thou giv'st me life
Indeed!

VIBULANUS. That I may give thee
life indeed,

I'll waste no longer time with thee;
"for that

"Already taken to assure thee of

"Thy fast reviving fortunes, cheats
them of

"The aid should help to re-establish
them."

Farewell, my Appius! If my absence
takes

A friend from thee, it leaves one with
thee — Hope! [Exit]

APPIUS. And I will clasp it to me!
Never friend

Made sweeter promises. But snatch me
from

Beneath the feet of the vile herd, that's
now

Broke loose and roams at large, I'll
show them who

They'd trample on. "Hope! Hope!
They say of thee,

"Thou art a friend that promises, but
cares not

"To keep his word. This once k
thine with Appius,

"And he will give thee out so tru
tongue,

"Thy word is bond enough!" —
liberty!

Again at liberty! Oh, give me pow
As well, for every minute of my thral

I'll pick a victim from the common n
Shall groan his life in bondage. "I

erty!

"'Tis triumph, power, dominion, ev
thing!"

Are ye not open yet, ye servile gates
Let fall your chains, and push your b

aside!
It is your past and future lord comman

you!

VIRGINIUS [rushing in]. Give me
daughter!

APPIUS. Ha!

VIRGINIUS. My child! my daught
My daughter! my Virginia! Give

me!

APPIUS. Thy daughter!

VIRGINIUS. Ay! Deny that she
mine,

And I will strangle thee, unless the l
Should choke thee first.

APPIUS. Thy daughter!

VIRGINIUS. Play not with me!
Provoke me not! Equivocate, and l

Thou sport'st with fire. I am wild, c
tracted, mad!

I am all a flame — a flame! I tell t
once

For all, I want my child, and I will ha
her;

So give her to me.

APPIUS. Caged with a madma
Hoa!

Without, there!

VIRGINIUS. Not a step thou stir
from hence,

Till I have found my child. "Atten
that noise

"Again, and I will stop the vent, t
not

"A squeak shall pass it. There
plugs for you,

"Will keep it air-tight. [Shows
fingers]" Please you, give me ba

My daughter.

APPIUS. In truth she is not he
Virginius;

Or I would give her to thee.

VIRGINIUS. Would? Ay, should!

Tho' would were would not. Do y

say, indeed,

She is not here? You nothing know

her?

VI. Nothing, Virginius! good
Virginius, nothing.

GINIUS. How if I thrust my hand
into your breast,
and your heart out, and confronted
your tongue? I'd like it. Shall
I try it? Fool!
Not the ruffians leagued? The one
would swear
the tale o' the other.

VI. By the gods, Virginius,
your daughter is not in my keeping.

GINIUS. Well,
I must seek her elsewhere. I did
dream

I had murder'd her — You lie!
It was but
a dream — She isn't here, you say —
Well! well!

I must go and seek her elsewhere
— Yet

not at home — and where else
should I seek her,

here or here? Here! here! here!
Yes, I say,

here or here — I tell you I must
find her —

Must be here, or what do you here?
What,

such a wonder of rich beauty could
be out a dungeon, so as to despoil
the face of its tenant? Art thou not

tyrant Appius? — Did'st thou not
decree

your daughter to be Claudius' slave, who
have her

as master? Have you not secur'd
her here

to compass her dishonour, ere her father
comes to claim her?

VI. No.

GINIUS. Do you tell me so?
Tyrant! Think you, shall I not
believe

your own eyes before your tongue?
Why, there she is!

at your back — her locks dis-
hevel'd, and

vestment torn! Her cheeks all
reddened with

pouring tears, "as flowers with too
much rain!"

form no longer kept and treasur'd
up,

her maiden-pride, like a rich casket,
fast

is neglected, and forgot, because
the richer gem was shrin'd in it is
lost!"

Is this a sight to show a father?

And have I not a weapon to requite
thee? [*Searches about his clothes*]

Ha! here are ten!

APPIUS. Keep down your hands!
Help! help!

VIRGINIUS. No other look but that!
Look on! look on!

It turns my very flesh to steel — Brave
girl!

Keep thine eye fix'd — let it not twink
— Look on! [*Exeunt, struggling*]

[*Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS,
GUARD, and SOLDIER, bearing VIR-
GINIA'S Urn*]

NUMITORIUS. Not here!

LUCIUS. Is this the dungeon? —
Appius is not here,

Nor yet Virginius. You have sure
mistaken.

GUARD. This is the dungeon — Here
Virginius entered.

NUMITORIUS. Yet is not here!
Hush! The abode of death

Is just as silent. Gods! should the
tyrant take

The father's life, in satisfaction for
The deed that robb'd him of the daugh-
ter's charms —

Hush! hark! A groan! There's some-
thing stirs.

LUCIUS. 'Tis this way!

NUMITORIUS. Come on! Protect
him, gods, or pardon me,

If with my own hand I revenge his
death. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE FOURTH. — *Another Dungeon. —*

VIRGINIUS discovered on one knee, with
APPIUS lying dead before him.

[*Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, with the
Urn of VIRGINIA, and LUCIUS*]

NUMITORIUS. What's here? Vir-
ginius! with the tyrant prostrate
and dead!

LUCIUS. His senses are benumb'd;
there is no adit to his mind, by which
our words can reach it. Help to raise
him: the motion may recall perception.

NUMITORIUS. His eye is not so
deathlike fix'd: it moves a little.

LUCIUS. Speak to him, Numitorius;
he knows your voice the best.

NUMITORIUS. Virginius!

LUCIUS. I think he hears you; speak
again.

NUMITORIUS. Virginius!

VIRGINIUS. Ah!

LUCIUS. That sigh has burst the spell which held him.

NUMITORIUS. Virginius! my dear brother!

VIRGINIUS. Lighter! lighter! My heart is ten times lighter! What a load it has heaved off! Where is he? I thought I had done it.

NUMITORIUS. Virginius!

VIRGINIUS. Well, who are you? What do you want? I'll answer what I've done.

NUMITORIUS. Do you not know me, brother? Speak, Icilius, try if he knows you.

ICILIUS. Virginius!

NUMITORIUS. Virginius!

VIRGINIUS. That voice — that voice — I know that voice!

It minds me of a voice was coupled
it,
And made such music, once to hear
was

Enough to make it ever after be
Remembered! [*ICILIUS places the
in his hand*] What's this?

ICILIUS. Virginia!

[*VIRGINIUS looks alternately
ICILIUS and the Urn—looks
NUMITORIUS and LUCIUS
seems particularly struck by
mourning—looks at the
again—bursts into a paroxysm
of tears, and exclaims, "Virginia!"—Falls on ICILIUS's
neck. Curtain drops*]

END OF THE FIFTH ACT

EPILOGUE

Written by Barry Cornwall, Esq., and spoken by Miss Brunton

LEAVING the common path, which many tread,
 We will not wake with jokes our poet's dead;
 Nor shame the young creations of his pen,
 By bidding all, who've perish'd, be again.
 The pale Virginia, in her bloody shroud,
 Lies like a shrinèd saint. — Oh! then, aloud
 Shall we break scurril jests, and bid depart
 Those thoughts of her, which fill and teach the heart?
 No moral now we offer, squar'd in form,
 But Pity, like the sun-light, bright and warm,
 Comes mix'd with showers; and, fading, leaves behind
 A beauty and a blossom on the mind.
 We do not strain to show that "thus it grows."
 And "hence we learn" what every body knows:
 But, casting idle dogmas (words) aside,
 We paint a villain in his purple pride;
 And, tearing down a pow'r that grew too bold,
 Show — merely what was done in days of old.
 Leaving this image on the soul, we go
 Unto our gentler story, touch'd with woe;
 (With woe that wantons not, nor wears away
 The heart) and love too perfect for decay.
 But whatsoe'er we do, we will not shame
 Your better feeling, with an idle game
 Of grin and mimicry (a loathsome task);
 Or strip the great Muse of her mighty mask,
 And hoot her from her throne of tears and sighs,
 Until, from folly and base jest, she dies.
 No; let her life be long, her reign supreme —
 If but a dream, it is a glorious dream.

Dwell, then, upon our tale; and bear along
 With you, deep thoughts — of love — of bitter wrong —
 Of freedom — of sad pity — and lust of pow'r.
 The tale is fitted for an after hour.

ACK-EY'D SUSAN; OR, "ALL IN THE DOWNS"

(1829)

BY DOUGLAS JERROLD

DOUGLAS JERROLD

(1803-1857)

DOUGLAS JERROLD's talents were so many-sided, he was so closely associated with that school of wit which flourished at the editorial table of *Punch*, that it is difficult to separate him from that group, and to estimate him solely as a dramatist. He watched the theatre, as his associates watched it; he attempted various forms of drama, passing from "Black-ey'd Susan" and "The Rent Day" to "Thomas Ket" with an ease which characterized all the early Victorian playwrights. Two best-known dramas reflect Jerrold's ability to estimate popular taste, on the one hand, and to take advantage of historical interest, on the other. The success of "Black-ey'd Susan", for instance, was largely due to the pride with which the public regarded her navy after the exploits of Nelson. "The Rent Day" utilized the reform spirit which was dominating Parliament, and which resulted in the repeal of laws and customs which had held the lower classes of England in bondage. In other words, Jerrold was impelled toward the new spirit, just as Robertson was attracted to the breaking down of social barriers in "Caste", by the legislation of the time. Added to which, his traditions were of the theatre, his father, Samuel Jerrold, having been an actor, and he, as a small boy, having learned to read and write from members of his father's company.

Jerrold's life history is peculiarly one of association with the keenest literary circles of the time. He was the friend of Thackeray, of Dickens, of Tom Taylor, of Tennyson, and Mark Lemon. He was loved by them and, in turn, he was disapproved by them. For his tongue was sharp, and his wit was often cruel. It is said of Thackeray who, though famed for his quick satire, was of the most sensitive temperament, was wont to tear the wrapper from his weekly copy of *Punch* with his teeth to "what Master Jerrold was saying about him now."

Early in life Jerrold was a sailor. He shipped at a time when conditions were at their worst (1813). In 1815, he was on His Majesty's Brig, *Ernest*, as a midshipman, transporting troops before the battle of Waterloo. During this while, his interest in the theatre was evidenced by the fact that he has left somewhere an indelible and vivid impression of the acting of Edmund Kean. It is said that he organized theatricals on board ship, developing a passion for amateur theatricals which never after to be satisfied when he joined with Tennyson, Dickens, and Mark Lemon in his amateur ventures. This probably inspired Jerrold to play-writing. He was only eighteen years old when his first piece for the stage was produced, on April 21. It was called "More Frightened Than Hurt", having previously borne the title of "The Duellists."

In the words of Blanchard Jerrold, it must be remembered that:

This was the time when Scott was in the ascendancy, Shelley was talking of socialism, Charles Lamb was middle-aged, Wordsworth and Coleridge at the height of their powers, Byron in debt, Cobbett politically strong, Keats struggling for his own.

One can see, therefore, that Douglas Jerrold lived when there was beginning to be a distinct cleavage between old forces and the new. His influences were same as those which shaped Thackeray and Dickens. The events of his early point to the reasons why he was interested in the nautical drama. By 1827, he received an initial apprenticeship in the writing of dramas, by doing hack work for Davidge, of the Coburg Theatre, at £5 a week. It was at this time that Elliston, the admired actor of Charles Lamb, leaving Drury Lane Theatre as manager, took over the Surrey, and to him Jerrold offered the manuscript of "*Black-ey'd Susan*; or, *All in the Downs*", which was immediately accepted, and produced on Whit Monday, June 8, 1829, when the author was only twenty-six.

It brought a fortune to Elliston and to T. P. Cooke, who created the part of *William*, but it brought a bare pittance to the author, in accordance with the custom of the day. It was described as a domestic drama, and was characterized by prodigality of scenes and by quietness and simplicity of situation. The pattern of the piece also was of the kind which, however stereotyped and artificial in quality, would retain the power to appeal to the sentimental in all audiences. In other words, as Clement Scott said, many years after :

The human contrasts used by Jerrold in this play, the lights and shadows of joy and sorrow, the domestic struggles and passions are of such character and never can lose their power.

On the first night the play was not a great success. This was attributed to the fact that it was a hot evening, and the audience was noisy in consequence. Blanchard Jerrold says :

Now and then, in a lull, the seeds of wit intrusted by the author to the gardener (Mr. Buckstone), were loudly appreciated; but the early scenes of *Susan's* "heart-rending woe" could not appease the clamour. By and by came the clever dénouement when, just previously to the execution, the *Captain* enters with a document proving *William* to have been discharged when he committed the offence. The attentive few applauded so loudly as to silence the noisy audience. They listened, and caught up the capitally-managed incident. The effect was startling and electrical. The whole audience leaped with joy, and rushed into frantic enthusiasm.

Success led T. P. Cooke to reach out for a monopoly of nautical characters, and tremendous was his personal triumph. It likewise tempted Jerrold to try his hand at writing another play dealing with the navy, and called "*Mutiny at the North*". It was played in 1830. By this time Jerrold had reached an independent position where, instead of doing hack work, he could make his own terms.

However much Charles Dickens may have travestied "*Black-ey'd Susan*" he was one of those to feel the power of *William* in the hands of Cooke, to whom he wrote :

It was so fresh and vigorous, so manly and gallant, that I felt as if it splashed against my theatre-heated face along with the spray of the breezy sea.

The stage history of the "*Black-ey'd Susan*" is fully given in W. Davenport Adams's "*A Dictionary of the Drama*."

The play has been burlesqued a number of times, once by Sims and Pettit, and another time by Burnand, as Adams notes. The most flagrant example of rewriting

place when Mr. and Mrs. Kendal appeared in a desecration called "William Susan", and prepared by the dramatist, W. G. Wills. This was given during the régime of the Kendals and Hare at the St. James's Theatre—a régime ushered in by Tennyson's "The Falcon" in the fall of 1879.

W. G. Wills, reviewing this revival, which was given in October, 1880, wrote:

"Wills . . . has, in fact, totally sunk and destroyed two out of Douglas Jerrold's three acts.

When this was done, so it was stated, with the consent of Douglas Jerrold's son, although the son may not have known how distorted Wills would make his father's comedy.

After all, [writes Cook] Jerrold's "Black-ey'd Susan", if a little old-fashioned, is not such a very obsolete work. It is a picture—somewhat delicately coloured, it may be—of a past epoch; it is constructed after a straggling fashion, and includes many of those changes of scene—those sudden meetings and partings of "flats"—which modern stage-managers deprecate and eschew. But Jerrold never wrote coarsely or vulgarly: he was essentially the author of refinement; and there is nothing in any of his plays that need to be judged wounding to the susceptibilities even of Miss Podsnap and her class.

During this while, Jerrold was winning a reputation for himself by his writing in various directions, but for a time his dramatic ventures occupied most of his energies. He wrote for the *Athenæum*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Monthly Magazine*, and also the famous *Blackwood's*. When some of his writings were gathered in three volumes, called "Men of Character", and published in 1838, they carried illustrations by Thackeray.

Punch was established in 1841, and, in issue Number 2, Douglas Jerrold made his contribution, September 13, 1841. Thereafter, he was continually identified with this representative weekly, writing for it "Punch's Letters to his Son", "Mrs. Ale's Curtain Lectures", and other famous series. Not content with writing these magazines, he was connected with publishing ventures of his own. In 1842 he contributed to *The Illuminated Magazine*, in 1845 to *The Douglas Jerrold Magazine*, and in 1845 to the *Douglas Jerrold Weekly Newspaper*. He was very prolific, writing continually and lengthily. Up to the time of his death, he edited the *Weekly Newspaper*, preparing the chief leaders. On June 8, 1857, Douglas Jerrold died, and was buried at Norwood Cemetery,—Charles Dickens, Thackeray, Mark Twain, and John Forster being among his pallbearers.

High Hunt once said of Jerrold that even though his wit may have had the sting of a bee, his heart possessed the sweetness of honey; and the testimony of his life was of the kindest sort. Like his contemporaries, he came in for a great deal of censure from Maeready, the actor, for whom he wrote several pieces. Maeready's over-seriousness regarding his own position never allowed him, for a moment, to enjoy any of the pleasantries perpetrated by Jerrold. We find him in "The Diary", on September 6, 1842, resenting a reference to himself in *Punch*,

"a set of low-mannered, ignorant, and ill-conditioned men, who rejoice in making miserable Jerrold as their captain; they abuse all they envy.

To such an extent did Maeready's sensitiveness prejudice him that, even when he attended private theatricals conducted by Lemon and Dickens, he could see

nothing in Jerrold's poor attempts, however much he might consider the farce between the other actors "broad and laughable." Yet he was continually dining with Jerrold, in company with Dickens, Forster, Lemon and Leech, and often found himself much chagrined over the unwisdom of his prejudices. For instance, at one meeting, he was introduced to À Beckett, and in his entry, October 13, 1846, he said :

I remember when I detested the name of this Mr. À Beckett, whom I did not know, because he wrote, or was said to have written, disparagingly of me in the *Figaro*! I like him, knowing him, very much.

His impressions of a dinner, given by Jerrold at Putney Heath, show how harsh he was, moved by the temper of the moment. For instance, he considered Leigh Hunt

particularly disagreeable. Disputative and tedious — affecting great benevolence and arguing most malevolently. He is a good-tempered coxcomb — but coxcomb heart and soul — not meaning harm to any, but a coxcomb.

The prolific Jerrold is nowhere better seen than in the delightful history of *Punch*, written by Spielmann, wherein it is estimated that the editors of *Punch* contributed to the Victorian stage no less than five hundred plays. In other words, all of the burlesques and travesties that found their way on the stage of the time were reflective of the burlesque and travesty spirits in *Punch's* cartoons, reflective of passing events.

Spielmann writes regarding Jerrold's association with the English comic weekly :

No man ever gained so much from the paper in which he worked. He was simply frolicked in its pages, that fitted his talent as accurately as his genius suited the times in which he lived. It is doubtful whether he would make the same mark in it were he alive to-day ; he would have to seek another publication and another public, or else adopt an utter change of tone. But in those lively times, when, obeying the summons addressed to him in Boulogne, he sent his first political paper — beginning characteristically with the introduction of Peel, in time for the second number — he gave his powers full play. And his sparkle was the brighter for its setting and its surroundings. His wit was for the most part caustic and saturnine, and in no other journal could it have so completely identified itself with the *ensemble* of tone. Without *Punch*, Jerrold would certainly not have been so distinguished a man ; yet he somewhere says in one of his works, with a touch of ingratitude : "If you'd pass for somebody you must sneer at a play, but idolize *Punch*" — as though this were the height of priggishness. He was a keen judge of things, and might have held that view ; but it was hardly for him, of all men, to publish it.

Even toward the end of his life, when rheumatic pains made it an effort for him to write, Jerrold maintained his same jocose manner.

As we have intimated, at the time of his death, his friends described him with loving touches of appreciation. Somewhere Dickens writes :

He was one of the gentlest and most affectionate of men. I remember very well that when I first saw him, in about the year 1835, when I went into his

room in Thistle Grove, Brompton, and found him propped up in a great chair, bright-eyed, and quick, and eager in spirit, but very lame in body, he made me an impression of tenderness. . . . In the company of children and old people he was particularly happy. . . . He never was so gay, so sweet-tempered, so pleasing, and so pleased as then. Among my own children I have observed this many and many a time.

As much of a valued friend was Dickens to Jerrold that the latter could not brook any very long estrangement. A misunderstanding arising between them is recorded that Jerrold met Dickens at a Club dining-room :

"For God's sake, let us be friends again!" exclaimed Jerrold. "A life's long enough for this."

Another impression of Jerrold tempers the satirical portrait given by so many. John Yates, the actor, has written :

"I had often been in his company, and had heard him flash forth the biting wit and quick repartee for which, in our day, he has had no rival. A small, delicately-formed bent man, with long grey hair combed back from his forehead, with grey eyes deep set under penthouse brows, and a way, just as inspiration seized him, of dangling a double eyeglass, which hung round his neck by a broad black ribbon : a kindly man for all his bitter tongue . . . and easy with women and children.

It was this loveliness of the man which made so many run to the rescue of his friends, who, at his death, were left in straitened circumstances. Wilkie Collins, George Thackeray, — all of them tried to see what they could do to raise money for his memory. Thackeray, at the request of Dickens, gave his lecture, "Week-day lectures"; Forster wanted a revival of "The Rent Day" and "Black-ey'd Peter". The plans developed and were put through with success.

Jerrold's loss was a genuine grief to every one. No better illustration of the way in which his friendship persisted, in spite of constant aggravation, can be found than the association of Thackeray and Douglas Jerrold, who were members of the same clubs, who dined at the same supper-rooms, and who had respect for each other even though it is supposed that Jerrold never could quite understand Thackeray. Unfortunately, none of that wit for which he was famous crept into "Black-ey'd Peter", which is more illustrative of the gentleness and domesticity of Jerrold than of his humorous point-of-view regarding the weaknesses of the age in which he lived.

BLACK-EY'D SUSAN;

OR,

"ALL IN THE DOWNS"

A NAUTICAL AND DOMESTIC DRAMA—IN TWO ACTS

By DOUGLAS JERROLD

CASTS OF "BLACK-EY'D SUSAN" AT FIRST PRODUCTIONS IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

Royal Surrey, London, Tremont, Boston, 183

June 8, 1829

WILLIAM	Mr. T. P. Cooke	Mr. T. Cline
CAPT. CROSSTREE	Mr. Forrester	Mr. J. E. Murdock
RAKER	Mr. Warwick	Mr. P. C. Cunningham
HATCHET	Mr. Yardley	Mr. W. H. Curtis
DOGGRASS	Mr. Dibdin Pitt	Mr. W. F. Johnson
ADMIRAL	Mr. Gough	Mr. J. G. Gilbert
JACOB TWIG	Mr. Rogers	Mr. D. Whiting
GNATBRAIN	Mr. Buckstone	Mr. G. H. Andrews
BLUE PETER	Mr. Williamson	—————
SEAWEED	Mr. Asbury	Mr. B. L. Benson
QUID	Mr. Lee	Mr. Powell
LIEUT. PIKE	Mr. Hicks	Mr. Seaver
YARN	Mr. Dowsing	—————
PLOUGHSHARE	Mr. Webb	—————
BLACK-EY'D SUSAN	Miss Scott	Mrs. G. H. Barrett
DOLLY MAYFLOWER	Mrs. Vale	Miss A. Fisher

Sailors, Midshipmen, Officers, etc.

The Music throughout this Piece is chiefly Selections from Dibdin's Naval Airs

BLACK-EY'D SUSAN

ACT I

SCENE FIRST. — *A View of the Country.*

Enter DOGGRASS and GNATBRAIN

DOGGRASS. Tut! if you are inclined to reach, here is a mile-stone — I'll go with you in its company.

GNATBRAIN. Ay, it's all very well for you; but you have broken poor Susan's heart, and as for William —

DOGGRASS. What of him?

GNATBRAIN. The sharks of him, for you care. Didn't you make him a sailor, and leave his young wife, the little, delicate black-ey'd Susan, that pretty piece of soft-speak-womanhood, your niece? Now haven't you qualms? On a winter's night, now, when the snow is lying at your door, what do you do?

DOGGRASS. Shut it.

GNATBRAIN. And what, when you hear the wind blowing at your chimney?

DOGGRASS. Get closer to it.

GNATBRAIN. What, when in your ear you turn up one side at the thun-

DOGGRASS. Turn round on the other. Go on with your catechism?

GNATBRAIN. No, I'd rather go and listen to the echoes. A fair day to you, Mr. Doggrass! If your conscience —

DOGGRASS. Conscience! Phoo! my conscience sleeps well enough.

GNATBRAIN. Sleeps! Don't wake it — it might alarm you.

DOGGRASS. One word with you, — follow my advice: I go about like a bull, and you a gadfly buzzing about me. From this moment throw me part of counsellor.

GNATBRAIN. But don't you see? —

DOGGRASS. Don't you see these black eyes growing about us?

GNATBRAIN. Very well.

DOGGRASS. If a cudgel was cut from under every knave who busies him-

self in the business of others — don't you think it would mightily open the prospect?

GNATBRAIN. Perhaps it might: and don't you think that if every hard-hearted, selfish rascal that destroys the happiness of others, were strung up to the boughs before they were cut for cudgels, don't you think that instead of opening the prospect, it would mightily darken it?

DOGGRASS. I have given you warning — take heed! take heed! and with this counsel, I give you a good day.

[Exit]
GNATBRAIN. Ay, it's the only thing good you can give; and that only good, because it's not your own. That rascal has no more heart than a bagpipe! One could sooner make Dover Cliffs dance a reel to a penny whistle, than move him with words of pity or distress. No matter, let the old dog bark; his teeth will not last forever — and I yet hope to see the day when poor black-ey'd Susan, and the jovial sailor, William, may defy the surly cur that now divides them. [Exit]

[Enter RAKER and HATCHET]

RAKER. A plague on him! — if I thought he meant us foul play, —

HATCHET. Not he — 'twas a mistake.

RAKER. Aye, a mistake that nearly threw us into the hands of the Philistines. But I know why you have ever a good word for this same Doggrass.

HATCHET. Know! you know as much as the weathercock that answers every wind, yet cannot tell the point from which it blows. And what do you know?

RAKER. I know that Mrs. Susan, Doggrass's niece, has two black eyes.

HATCHET. Umph! your knowledge proves that, though a fool, you are not yet blind.

RAKER. Civil words, Master Hatchet.

HATCHET. What! be you as dumb as the figure-head of the *Starling*; as soft and as yielding as teased oakum — let my little finger be your helm, and see you answer it. Who am I?

RAKER. Tom Hatchet, the smuggler of Deal; Captain of the *Redbreast*, and trading partner with old Doggrass.

HATCHET. Thank'ee: now I'll tell you what you are — Bill Raker, first mate of the *Redbreast*, as great a rogue as ever died at the fore-yard, and consequently —

RAKER. The best person to go on your errands.

HATCHET. Just so; see you do them well. Now, bear up, whilst I pour a broadside of intelligence into you. I'm going to be married.

RAKER. You generally are at every port you put into.

HATCHET. Belay your jokes. To whom do you think? — you can't guess?

RAKER. No. It isn't to the last port-admiral's widow? Perhaps to big Betsy, the bumboat woman.

HATCHET. No, you albatross, — to Susan — black-ey'd Susan.

RAKER. Steady there — steady! — I'm no youngster. The lass is married already.

HATCHET. Aye, she had a husband. [Significantly]

RAKER. What! — why no!

HATCHET. How blows the wind now — what do you stare at? He's dead.

RAKER. William dead! Then there's not so fine, so noble, so taut-rigged a fellow in His Majesty's navy. Poor lad — poor lad!

HATCHET. Turning whimperer?

RAKER. Why not? Such news would make a mermaid cry in the middle of her singing.

HATCHET. Avast with your salt water! William is not dead: what think you now?

RAKER. That there is one more brave fellow in the world and one more liar.

HATCHET. Ha! —

RAKER. Slack your fore-sheet, Captain Hatchet; if you must spin such galley yarns, let it be to the marines, or the landlady of the Ship; but see that you don't again bring tears into an old sailor's eyes, and laugh at him for hoisting and answering pendant to signals of distress. You marry Susan? Now belay, belay the joke.

HATCHET. Listen to my story: it shall be short — short as a marlin-spike. I must marry Susan: she knows not you — you must swear that you were her husband's shipmate — that you saw him drowned. Susan now lives with old Dame Hatley — she has no other home; and if she refuse, Doggrass will seize for long arrears of rent, on the old woman's goods, and turn Susan adrift; then the girl has no chance left but to marry. Is it not a good scheme?

RAKER. Had the devil been purser, he could not have made a better.

HATCHET. I'm going now to Doggrass, to see further about it; meantime, do you think of the part you are to play, and I'll think how I can best reward you. [Exit]

RAKER. I must certainly look a scoundrel. There must be an invitation in my figure-head to all sorts of wickedness, else Captain Hatchet could never have offered such dirty work to an old sailor. I must look a villain and that's the truth. Well, there is no help for an ugly countenance; but if my face be ill-favoured, I'll take care to keep my heart of the right colour like the Dolphin tap, if I hang out a badly-painted sign-post, I'll see and keep good cheer within. [Exit]

SCENE SECOND. — DAME HATLEY'S Cottage. SUSAN is heard without, singing a verse of "*Black-ey'd Susan*."

[Enter SUSAN]

SUSAN. Twelve long, tedious months have passed, and no, no tidings of William. Shame upon the unkinde hearts that parted us — that sent my dear husband to dare the perils of the ocean, and made me a pining, miserable creature! Oh, the pangs, the dreadful pangs that tear the sailor's wife, as wakeful on her tear-wet pillow, she lists and trembles at the roaring sea!

[Enter GNATBRAIN, at the cottage door]

GNATBRAIN. There she is, like a caged nightingale, singing her heart out against her prison-bars — for this cottage is little better than a gaol to her. Susan!

SUSAN. Gnatbrain!

GNATBRAIN. In faith, Susan, if sorrow makes such sweet music, may I

er turn skylark, but always remain
ose.

SUSAN. Have you seen my uncle?

NATBRAIN. Oh, yes!

SUSAN. Will he show any kindness?

NATBRAIN. I cannot tell. Did you
see gooseberries grow upon a
page-stump? You have flowers
in an aloe-tree, if you wait a hundred
s.

SUSAN. He has threatened to dis-
s the good dame.

NATBRAIN. Ay, for the rent. Oh,
an, I would I were your landlord!
ould think myself well paid if you
ld allow me every quarter-day to
my ear to the key-hole, and listen
e of your prettiest ditties. Why,
uch payment, were I your landlord,
find you in board, washing, and
ing, and the use of a gig on Sun-
s. I wish I — But la! what's the
of my wishing? I'm nobody but
gardener, half waterman — a kind
ligator, that gets his breakfast from
shore, and his dinner from the sea
— [DOGGRASS passes window]

SUSAN. Oh, begone! I see Mr.
grass; if he find you here —

NATBRAIN. He must not; here's a
board — I'm afraid there's plenty
om in it.

SUSAN. No, no, I would not for the
d — there is no occasion — meet

NATBRAIN. Not I, for quiet's sake.
never meet but, like gunpowder
fire, there is an explosion. This
do. [Goes into the closet]

[Enter DOGGRASS]

DOGGRASS. Now, Susan, you know
business — I say, you know my
ness. I come for money.

SUSAN. I have none, sir.

DOGGRASS. A pretty answer, truly.
people to let their houses to beggars?

SUSAN. Beggars! Sir, I am your
her's orphan child.

DOGGRASS. I am sorry for it. I
he were alive to pay for you. And
re is your husband?

SUSAN. Do you ask where he is?
a poor, sir — poor and unprotected;
not, as you have children of your
s, do not insult me. [Weeps]

DOGGRASS. Ay, this is to let houses
omen; if the tax-gatherers were to
aid with crying, why, nobody would
more lustily than myself; let a man
for his rent, and you pull out your

pocket-handkerchief. Where's Dame
Hatley?

SUSAN. In the next room — ill, very
ill.

DOGGRASS. An excuse to avoid me;
she shall not. [Going]

SUSAN. You will not enter!

DOGGRASS. Who shall stop me?

SUSAN. If heaven give me power, I!
Uncle, the old woman is sick — I fear
dangerously. Her spirit, weakened by
late misfortune, flickers, like a dying
light. Your sudden appearance might
make all dark. Uncle — landlord! would
you have murder on your soul?

DOGGRASS. Murder?

SUSAN. Yes; though such may not
be the common word, hearts are daily
crushed, spirits broken — whilst he who
slays, destroys in safety.

DOGGRASS. Can Dame Hatley pay
me the money?

SUSAN. No.

DOGGRASS. Then she shall to prison.

SUSAN. She will die there.

DOGGRASS. Well?

SUSAN. Would you make the old
woman close her eyes in a gaol?

DOGGRASS. I have no time to hear
sentiment. Mrs. Hatley has no money
— you have none. Well, though she
doesn't merit lenity of me, I'll not be
harsh with her.

SUSAN. I thought you could not.

DOGGRASS. I'll just take whatever
may be in the house, and put up with
the rest of the loss.

[Enter DOLLY MAYFLOWER]

DOLLY. So, Mr. Doggrass, this is
how you behave to unfortunate folks —
coming and selling them up, and turn-
ing them out. Is this your feeling for
the poor?

DOGGRASS. Feeling! I pay the
rates. What business have you here?
Go to your spinning.

DOLLY. Spinning! if it were to spin
a certain wicked old man a halter, I'd
never work faster. Ugh! I always
thought you very ugly, but now you
look hideous.

SUSAN. Peace, good Dolly.

DOLLY. Peace! Oh, you are too
quiet — too gentle! Take example by
me: I only wish he'd come to sell me
up, that's all. [DOGGRASS goes to door]
Oh, I know who you are looking after —
your man, Jacob Twig; he hops after
you on your dirty work, like a tomtit
after a jackdaw — I saw him leering in

at the door. I wish my dear Gnat-brain was here. Oh, Susan, I wish he was here; he's one of the best, most constant of lovers — he'd befriend you for my sake.

DOGGRESS [*goes to the door*]. Jacob!

[*Enter JACOB TWIG. He has a memorandum book in his hand, a pen in his ear, and an ink-bottle in the buttonhole of his coat.*]

You know your business.

JACOB. What, here, master? What, at old Dame Hatley's?

DOLLY. To be sure, good Jacob; if your master had a tree, and but one squirrel lived in it, he'd take its nuts, sooner than allow it lodging gratis.

SUSAN. Uncle, have compassion — wait but another week — a day.

DOGGRESS. Not an hour — a minute. Jacob, do your duty. Now begin; put down everything you see in the cottage.

JACOB. Master, hadn't you better wait a little? Perhaps the Dame can find friends. [DOGGRESS *is imperative*] Well, here goes: I'll first begin with the cupboard.

SUSAN [*stopping him*]. No, let me entreat you do not. Come this way, if you are still determined.

DOGGRESS. Eh! why that way? why not with the cupboard? I suspect —

JACOB. And now, so do I.

DOLLY. You suspect! I dare say, suspicion is all your brain can manage. What should you suspect — a thing that never had a thought deeper than a mug of ale? You suspect Susan! Why, we shall have the crows suspecting the lilies.

JACOB. You say so, do you? Now, I'll show you my consequence. I'll put everything down, master, and begin with the cupboard. Ah! it's fast: I'll have it open — and I'll put the first thing down.

[*Pulls open the door, when GNATBRAIN knocks JACOB down with rolling-pin, and stands in attitude. — SUSAN in corner. — DOLLY in surprise. — DOGGRESS exulting*]

GNATBRAIN. No, I'll put the first thing down.

DOLLY. Gnatbrain! Oh, Susan, Susan!

DOGGRESS. Oh, oh! we shall have the crows suspecting the lilies! Pretty flower! how it hangs its head! Go on

with your duty, Jacob; put down everything in the house.

GNATBRAIN. Do, Jacob; and begin with "one broken head" — then, one stony-hearted landlord — one innocent young woman — ditto, jealous — one man tolerably honest — and one somewhat damaged.

JACOB. I'll have you up before justices — you have broken my crown.

GNATBRAIN. Broken your crown! Jacob, Jacob, it was cracked before!

JACOB. How do you know that?

GNATBRAIN. By the ring of it, Jacob — by the ring: I never heard such a bit of Brummagem in my life.

DOGGRESS [*to SUSAN*]. Well, Susan, it is sometimes convenient, is it not, for a husband to be at sea?

SUSAN. Sir, scorn has no word, — contempt no voice to speak my loathing of your insinuations. Take, sir, all that is here; satisfy your avarice; but dare not indulge your malice at the cost of one who has now nothing left her in her misery but the sweet consciousness of virtue. [*Exit*]

DOGGRESS. The way with all women when they are found out, is it not, Mrs. Dolly?

DOLLY. I can't tell, sir; I never was found out.

DOGGRESS. Ay, you are lucky.

DOLLY. Yes — we don't meet often. But as for you, Mr. Gnatbrain —

GNATBRAIN. Now, no insinuations. I wish I could remember what Susan said about virtue: it would apply to my case admirably. Nothing like a sentiment to stop accusation — one may apply it to a bleeding reputation as barbers do cobwebs to a wound.

DOGGRESS. Jacob, do you stay here — see that nothing of the least value leaves the house.

GNATBRAIN. In that case, Jacob, you may let your master go out.

DOGGRESS. Some day, my friend, I shall be a match for you. [*Exit*]

GNATBRAIN. Perhaps so, but one of us must change greatly to make us pairs. [GNATBRAIN *then pursues JACOB into corner*] Jacob, I never look upon your little carcase, but it puts me in mind of a pocket edition of the Newgate Calendar — a neat Old Bailey duodecimo. You are a most villanous-looking rascal — an epitome of a noted highwayman.

JACOB. What!

GNATBRAIN. True as the light.

ou have a most Tyburnlike physiog-
omy: there's Turpin in the curl of
our upper lip — Jack Sheppard in the
under one — your nose is Jerry Aber-
naw himself — Duval and Barrington
e your eyes — and as for your chin,
ay Sixteen-String Jack lives again in
[GNATBRAIN goes to window, affect-
g to see what is passing outside] Eh!
ell done — excellent! there's all the
ighbours getting the furniture out the
arden window.

JACOB. Is there? It's against the
w. I'm his Majesty's officer, and
ll be among them in a whistle.

[JACOB rushes off; GNATBRAIN in-
stantly bolts door]

GNATBRAIN. A bailiff, like a snow-
orm, is always best on the outside.
ow Dolly, sweet Dolly Mayflower,
on't you look at me? Won't you be
e summer cabbage of my heart, and
t me cultivate you?

DOLLY. Don't talk to me, sir! —
e cupboard, sir — the cupboard.

GNATBRAIN. Hear my defence. On
y word, I had not the least idea that
ou would have found me, or the cup-
ard is the last place I should have
one into.

DOLLY. It's no matter; there's Mr.
ames Rattlin, boatswain's mate of the
ellerophon —

GNATBRAIN. What! you wouldn't
arry a sailor?

DOLLY. And why not?

GNATBRAIN. Your natural timidity
ouldn't allow you.

DOLLY. My timidity?

GNATBRAIN. Yes; you wouldn't like
be left alone o'nights. Your husband
ould be at sea for six months out of the
elve; there would be a wintry pros-
pect for you.

DOLLY. But he would be at home
e other six months — and there's
ummer, sir.

GNATBRAIN. True, but when you
an have summer all the year round,
on't you think it more to your ad-
antage?

DOLLY. No — for, if it always shone,
e should never really enjoy fine
eather.

GNATBRAIN. Oh, my dear, when we
re married, we'll get up a thunder-
orm or two, depend upon it. But
ome, Dolly, your heart is too good,
our head too clear, to nourish idle
uspicion. Let us go and see poor

Susan. There is real calamity enoug
in our every-day paths; we need no
add to it by our idle follies. [Exeun

SCENE THIRD. — *A View of the Country*

[Enter HATCHET]

HATCHET. Doggrass has made th
seizure by this time. Now I'll step in
pay the money, and thus buy the grat
tude of Susan, before I tell her the stor
of her husband's death.

[Enter JACOB, running]

Bring up there, my young skif
Whither bound?

JACOB. I'm in a hurry.

HATCHET. Bring up, I say, or I'
spoil your figurehead.

[Lifting his cudgel]

JACOB. Do you know who I am?

HATCHET. No; what are you, m
young flying-fish?

JACOB. I'm a bailiff — aren't yo
frightened? I serve Mr. Doggrass.

HATCHET. The very craft I was sai
ing after. You have been to Susan's —
Black-ey'd Susan's, as she's called?

JACOB. How do you know that?

HATCHET. You have made a seizur
there?

JACOB. Right again.

HATCHET. Have secured everything

JACOB. Wrong. I had made a
pretty a piece of business of it as an
of my craft — a very pretty stroke o
handiwork; but somehow or the other —

HATCHET. You frighten me. No
body paid the money, I hope?

JACOB. Oh, don't be alarmed a
that; no, but somehow or the other
quite by a mistake, when I thought
was in possession, I found myself on th
wrong side of the house. And, her
comes Susan.

[Enter SUSAN]

JACOB. Aren't you ashamed o
yourself, Mrs. Susan, to make one t
cozen so innocent a little bailiff as my
self — aren't you ashamed of yourself

HATCHET [throwing Jacob over to lef
Stand o' one side! What, in troubl
my pretty Susan? What, have th
land-sharks got aboard of the cottage
Come, cheer up.

SUSAN. What, do you indeed pit
me? This is kind, and, from a strange
unexpected.

HATCHET. Not such a stranger as you may think.

SUSAN. No.

HATCHET. No, I know your husband — sailed with him.

SUSAN. You did! Oh, tell me everything!

HATCHET. All in good time. *[To JACOB]* What do you want here — sticking like a barnacle to a ship's copper?

[Strikes JACOB with cudgel]

JACOB. Want! Oh, here comes my master — he'll tell you what I want. I'll leave you with him — he'll answer all questions.

[Exit, but returns, and strikes HATCHET with book, and runs off]

[Enter DOGGRASS]

DOGGRASS. So, madam, you must show contempt to a king's officer — put a servant of the law out of doors!

HATCHET. Steady there! none of your overhauling. What do you want with the young woman?

DOGGRASS. What's that to you?

SUSAN. Oh, pray don't quarrel on my account — do not, I entreat you!

HATCHET *[aside]*. I'll swagger a little. Quarrel, my dear — I'd fight yard-arm to yard-arm for you — go on a boarding party, cut out, row under a battery, or fight in a rocket-boat; anything for the pretty black-ey'd Susan.

DOGGRASS. Well, as you'll do all this, perhaps you'll pay the money she owes.

HATCHET. That will I, though it were the last shot in my locker.

SUSAN. No, no, there is no occasion; I would not have it for the world.

DOGGRASS. You wouldn't? I would — but don't be afraid — he'll talk, but he'll be long ere he pays twelve pounds seventeen and sixpence for you, black-ey'd and pretty as you are.

HATCHET. See how little you know of a sailor; there's thirteen pounds — I'm not much of an accountant, but it strikes me that that will pay your little bill, and just leave a dirty two-and-sixpence for young Jibboom, the bailiff.

SUSAN. Oh, my good, kind friend — this generosity — my thanks, my prayers!

HATCHET. Not a word, not a word — good-bye.

SUSAN. Yet, do not leave me; you said you knew my husband — had a tale to tell of him.

HATCHET. Yes, but not now; to-morrow. If I have done anything to oblige you, let me ask the delay. Besides, then I will bring one with me who can tell you more of William than myself; meantime, farewell. *[Aside]* She's softened. A woman is like sealing-wax — only melt her, and she will take what form you please. I've bought her heart with the chink, and to-morrow will secure it. *[Exit]*

SUSAN. Wait till to-morrow! Alas! there is no remedy but patience; yet, spite of myself, I feel forebodings which I know 'tis weakness to indulge.

DOGGRASS. I suppose, Mrs. Susan, as the case at present stands, neither you nor the old dame will now think of leaving the cottage?

SUSAN. Indeed, landlord, we shall.

DOGGRASS. Landlord! why not uncle? it is a much better word.

SUSAN. It might have been, but your unkindness has taught me to forget it.

DOGGRASS. Now, hear reason *[she turns from him]*. Well, to be sure, a plain-spoken man can't expect it from one of your sex, so I'll leave you. You'll think again about the cottage? it has a pretty situation, and as for the rent, why, as one may say, it's a mere nothing. *[Exit]*

SUSAN. Cruel man! Oh, William! when, when will you return to your almost heartbroken Susan? Winds, blow prosperously, be tranquil, seas, and bring my husband to my longing eyes. *[Exit]*

SCENE FOURTH. — *A View of the Downs — The fleet at anchor.*

[Enter JACOB TWIG]

JACOB. After all, I don't much like this trade of bailiff. I've a great mind to give it up, go back to my native Dover again, and turn ploughman. *[Three cheers]* Holloa! the boats are putting off from the ships. Deal will be crowded again; there will be no getting a sweetheart for these six months. *[Music. — Three cheers]*

[Enter SEAWEEED, BLUE PETER, SAILORS, and WILLIAM]

WILLIAM. Huzza! huzza! my noble fellows, my heart jumps like a dolphin — my head turns round like a capstern;

as if I were driving before the gale
treasure for the haven of joy.

JACOB. But I say, William,
there's nobody here to meet us.

WILLIAM. Why, no! that is, you
because we dropped anchor afore
poor things had turned out of their
mocks. Ah! if my Susan knew
I was here, she'd soon lash and carry,
led up by the whistle of that young
swain's mate, Cupid, piping in her
t. Holloa! what craft is this?
er, ahoy! — what ship?

JACOB [taking off his hat]. My name
is Jacob Twigg.

WILLIAM. You needn't bring to,
or bare poles — cover your truck,
up with your answering pendant.
e, clear your signal halyards, and
away. What service?

JACOB. I'm in the law.

WILLIAM. Umph! belongs to the
et boats. May my pockets be
led, if I didn't think so! 'Tis
zebub's ship, the Law! she's neither
steer, bomb-ship, nor letter-o-mark;
built of green timber, manned
lob-lolly boys and marines; pro-
nounced with mouldy biscuit and bilge-
r, and fires nothing but red-hot
there's no grappling with or board-
er. She always sails best in a
n, and founders in fair weather.
sooner be sent adrift in the North
in a butter cask, with a 'bacco-box
my store-room, than sail in that
y's craft, the Law. My young
apus, I should like to have the mast-
ing of you in a stiff north-wester.

[Threatening him]

JACOB. Avast there, messmate!
I'll rake the cock-boat fore and aft.

JACOB [corner]. Don't cock the rake-
fore and aft.

[Frightened]

WILLIAM. Why, yes, I know it's
wing away powder and shot to
cockle-shells with forty-two-
nders. But warn't it the lawyers
turned me and Susan out of our
age? Why, I'd as soon had met
of Mother Carey's Chickens, as —
[Looking out] There's a fleet bear-
down.

PETER. A fleet? — Ay, and as smart
seventy-four on the King's birth-

WILLIAM. A little more to larboard,
mate. [WILLIAM throws JACOB to
right, the sailors pass him from one
e other till he is off] There's my
n! Now pipe all hands for a royal

salute; there she is, schooner-rigged.
I'd swear to her canvas from a whole
fleet. Now she makes more sail! —
outs with her studding-booms — mounts
her royals, moon-rakers and sky-
scrapers; now she lies to it! — now! —
now! — eh? May I be put on six-
water grog for a lubber.

PETER. What's the matter?

WILLIAM. 'Tisn't she — 'tisn't my
craft.

[Music. — Enter women, who wel-
come all the sailors. — Every
one, except WILLIAM, is met by
a female. — He looks anxiously
at every one. — All go off except
WILLIAM]

What! and am I left alone in the
doctor's list, whilst all the crew are
engaging! I know I look as lubberly
as a Chinese junk under a jewry
mast. I'm afraid to throw out a signal
— my heart knocks against my tim-
bers, like a jolly-boat in a breeze,
alongside a seventy-four. Damn it, I
feel as if half of me was wintering in the
Baltic, and the other half stationed in
Jamaica.

[Enter PLOUGHSHARE. — Music]

It's no use, I must ask for despatches.
Damn it, there can be no black seal to
them! Messmate!

PLOUGHSHARE. Now, friend.

[Comes down]

WILLIAM. Give us your grappling-
iron! Mayhap you don't know me!

PLOUGHSHARE. No.

WILLIAM. Well, that's hard to a
sailor, come to his native place. We
have ploughed many an acre together
in Farmer Sparrow's ground.

PLOUGHSHARE. What — William!
William that married Susan!

WILLIAM. Avast there! hang it —
that name, spoke by another, has
brought the salt water up; I can feel
one tear standing in either eye like a
marine at each gangway: but come, let's
send them below. [Wipes his eyes]
Now, don't pay away your line till I
pipe. I have been three years at sea;
all that time I have heard but once
from Susan — she has been to me a
main-stay in all weathers. I have been
piped up, — roused from my hammock,
dreaming of her, — for the cold, black
middle watch; I have walked the deck,
the surf beating in my face, but Susan
was at my side, and I did not feel it.

I have been reefing on the yards, in cold and darkness, when I could hardly see the hand of my next messmate; — but Susan's eyes were on me, and there was light. I have heard the boatswain pipe to quarters; — a voice in my heart whispered "Susan", and I strode like a lion. The first broadside was given; — shipmates, whose words were hardly off their lips, lay torn and mangled about me; — their groans were in my ears, and their blood hot on my face; — I whispered "Susan!" it was a word that seemed to turn the balls aside, and keep me safe. When land was cried from the mast-head, I seized the glass — my shipmates saw the cliffs of England — I, I could see but Susan! I leap upon the beach; my shipmates find hands to grasp and lips to press — I find not Susan's.

PLOUGHSHARE. Believe me —

WILLIAM. Avast there! if you must hoist the black flag — gently. Is she yet in commission? — Does she live?

PLOUGHSHARE. She does.

WILLIAM. Thank heaven! I'll go to church next Sunday, and you shall have a can of grog — eh! but your figurehead changes like a dying dolphin; she lives, but perhaps hove down in the port of sickness. No? what then, eh? — avast! not dead — not sick — yet — why, there's a galley-fire lighted up in my name — there's not an R in her name?

PLOUGHSHARE. What do you mean?

WILLIAM. Mean! grape and canister! She's not run, — not shown false colours?

PLOUGHSHARE. No, no.

WILLIAM. I deserve a round dozen for the question. Damn it, none of your small arms; but open all your ports and give fire.

PLOUGHSHARE. Susan is well — is constant; but has been made to feel that poverty is too often punished for crime.

WILLIAM. What, short of ammunition to keep off the land-sharks? But her uncle?

PLOUGHSHARE. He has treated her very unkindly.

WILLIAM. I see it! damn it, I'll overhaul him — I'll bring him on his beam-ends. Heave a-head, shipmate! — Now for my dear Susan, and no quarters for her uncle.

[Music. — *Exeunt* PLOUGHSHARE and WILLIAM]

[*Enter* CAPTAIN CROSSTREE]

CROSSTREE. In faith that's the prettiest little vessel I ever saw in long cruise. I threw out signals to her but she wouldn't answer. Here comes the fellow that passed me whilst I was talking to her.

[*Enter* GNATBRAIN]

Shipmate, there is a dollar for you. GNATBRAIN. Truly, sir, I would have had been messmates, you might think I have made it ten shillings.

CROSSTREE. You passed me a few minutes since, when I was in company with a petticoat.

GNATBRAIN. Ay; it's no use, Captain; she's a tight little craft, and faithful to all that is good as your ship to her helm.

CROSSTREE. What is her name? Who is she?

GNATBRAIN. We simply call her Susan — Black-ey'd Susan. She is the wife of a sailor.

CROSSTREE. Ay, what, fond of the blue-jackets?

GNATBRAIN. Yes, so fond of the jacket, that she'll never look at your long coat. Good-day, Captain. [*Exit*]

CROSSTREE. The wife of a sailor, wife of a common seaman! why, she fit for an admiral. I know it's wrong but I will see her — and come what may, I must, and will possess her. [*Exit*]

SCENE FIFTH. — *Interior of SUSAN's Cottage. — Same as Scene Second.*

[*Enter* WILLIAM at door]

WILLIAM. Well, here I am at last! I've come fifteen knots an hour, yet I felt as if I were driving astern all the time. So, this is poor Susan's berth — not aboard — out on liberty, and not come to the beach?

SUSAN [*without*]. Oh, say not so for mercy's sake!

WILLIAM. Eh! that's she; — ha! and with two strange-rigged craft in convoy; I'll tack a bit, and — damn it! if there's foul play! chain-shot and ball-shot! I'll rake 'em fore and aft.

[*Retire*]

[*Enter* SUSAN, HATCHET, and RAKER — *Slow music*]

[*Aside*] What, hanging out signals of distress?

SUSAN. Oh, these are heavy tidings
ed!

HATCHET. Don't take on so, pretty
n! If William is dead, there are
hands enough for so pretty a face
ours.

WILLIAM. Dead! may I never
see the mainbrace, if that swab
t want to get into my hammock.
HATCHET approaches nearer to SUSAN]
y, he's rowing alongside her with
ed oars, to cut her cable!—I'll
ahawk his rigging for him.

SUSAN. But is there no hope?

HATCHET. Hope! none. I tell you,
n, this honest fellow was William's
smate; he saw him go down;—you
't rightly hear him when he first
the story—tell it again, Tom.
AKER suddenly indicates his unwill-
[ness] Poor fellow! he was William's
ad, and the story hurts him. I'll
it you. You see, the ship had got
n the rocks, and it came on to blow
t guns; her timbers opened, and
broke her back;—all her masts were
board, and orders were given to
to the boats. William was in the
r-boat:—well, she hadn't got the
th of a boarding-pike from the
ek, when she shipped a sea, and
d she went. William, and twelve
r brave fellows, were in the water;
is shipmate here threw out a rope;
t was too late; William sunk, and
never seen more. His shipmate
ed round and saw—[During his
ch, RAKER has moved into the corner
he stage, his back to HATCHET, as if
illing to hear the story. — WILLIAM,
the conclusion of this speech, has
ed himself between HATCHET and
AN] Damnation!

SUSAN [shrieking and throwing herself
WILLIAM's arms]. William!

WILLIAM. Damn it, I'm running
r at the scuppers, or, you lubbers,
been aboard of you before this.
at! hang out false signals to the
icoat!—May you both have the
ow flag over you, and go up in the
ke of the fore-castle. Bring-to a
ute, and I'll be yard-arm and yard-
with you. What, Susan, Susan!
you swabs, how you've brought
white flag into her pretty figure-
d. [SUSAN revives; he relinquishes
hold of her] Now, then, I'll make
k of one of you.

SUSAN. William! William! for
ven's sake!—

WILLIAM. Just one little bout, Susan,
to see how I'd make small biscuit of
'em. You won't fight? Then take
that to the paymaster, and ask him for
the change. [Strikes HATCHET]

HATCHET. Struck! then here's one
of us for old Davy!

[Music. — Runs at WILLIAM with
a drawn cutlass, who catches his
right arm; they struggle round.
WILLIAM throws him off, and
stands over him. HATCHET on
his knee; same time LIEUTEN-
ANT PIKE appears inside of
door. — TWO MARINES appear
at window. — Tableau]

PIKE. Smugglers, surrender! or you
have not a moment's life.

[HATCHET and RAKER, startled by
the appearance of PIKE's party,
recoil]

WILLIAM. Smugglers! I thought
they were not man-of-war's-men; true
blue never piloted a woman on a quick-
sand.

PIKE [takes belt from HATCHET].
Here, William, wear this as a trophy of
your victory.

WILLIAM. Thank ye, your honour,
I'll ship it.

PIKE. Come, my lads, as you have
cheated the King long enough, you shall
now serve him—the fleet wants hands,
and you shall aboard.

WILLIAM. If they are drafted aboard
of us, all I wish is that I was boatswain's
mate, for their sake! Oh, wouldn't I
start 'em!

[Music. — Exeunt PIKE, HATCHET,
RAKER. — The MARINES follow]

Now, Susan [embraces her], may I be
lashed here until death gives the last
whistle.

SUSAN. Oh, William! I never
thought we should meet again.

WILLIAM. Not meet! Why, we shall
never part again. The Captain has
promised to write to the Admiralty for
my discharge. I saved his life in the
Basque Roads. But I say, Sue, why
wasn't you on the beach?

SUSAN. I knew not of your arrival.

WILLIAM. Why, a sailor's wife,
Susan, ought to know her husband's
craft, if he sailed in a washing-tub, from
a whole fleet. But how is this, Sue?—
how is this? Poverty aboard?—and
then your uncle—

[Enter DOGGRASS]

DOGGRASS [advances]. Now, Mrs. Susan, I am determined —

[Sees WILLIAM]

WILLIAM. The very griffin I was talking of. Now, what are you staring at? What are you opening your mouth for like the main hold of a seventy-four? I should like to send you to sea in a leaky gun-boat, and keep you at the pumps for a six months' cruise.

DOGGRASS. What! William!

[In a fawning tone, offering his hand]

WILLIAM. Avast, there! don't think to come under my lee in that fashion. Aren't you a neat gorgon of an uncle now, to cut the painter of a pretty pinnacle like this, and send her drifting down the tide of poverty, without ballast, provisions, or compass? May you live a life of ban-yan days, and be put six upon four for't!

DOGGRASS. But you mistake, William —

WILLIAM. No palaver! tell it to the marines. What, tacking and double tacking! Come to what you want to say at once. If you want to get into the top, go up the futtock shrouds like a man — don't creep through lubber's hole. What have you got to say?

DOGGRASS. Don't — you have put my heart into my mouth.

WILLIAM. Have I? I couldn't put a blacker morsel there! Just come alongside here. [Pulls him by neckcloth] I am not much of a scholar, and don't understand fine words. Your heart is as hard as a ring-bolt — to coil it up at once, you are a d——d rascal! If you come here after your friends, you'll find 'em in the cock-pit of one of the fleet. You have missed the rattlin this time, but brought yourself up by the shrouds. Now, take my advice, — strike your false colours, or I wouldn't give a dead marine for the chance of your neck. [DOGGRASS hurries off] That fellow would sit still at his grog, at the cry of "A man overboard!" Oh, Susan, when I look at your eyes, you put me in mind of a frigate, with marines firing from the tops! Come along, Sue: first to fire a salute to old Dame Hatley, then to my shipmates. To-day we'll pitch care overboard, without putting a buoy over him — call for the fiddles — start the rum cask — tipples the grog — and pipe all hands to mischief.

[Exeunt]

SCENE SIXTH. — A View near Deal. — Public House. — Table with bottles and cups at back, — forms and stools for sailors, &c. — Loud laughing and scene opens. — PETER, SEAWEEED, GNATBRAIN, DOLLY, SAILORS, RUTICS, MEN, and WOMEN discovered drinking.

SEAWEEED. Belay that galley yard Peter, belay!

GNATBRAIN. Oh, let him go on — he lies like a purser at reckoning day.

SEAWEEED. Where's William, I wonder? He promised to meet us. I suppose he's with his Susan now.

PETER. And where can he be better do you think? But suppose, just to pass the time away, I give you the song that was made by Tom Splinter, upon Susan's parting with William in the Downs?

ALL. Ay, the song — the song!

SEAWEEED. Come, pipe up, my boys. Poor Tom Splinter! he was cut in half by a bar-shot from the Frenchman. Well, every ball's commissioned. The song — the song!

PETER. Here goes; but I know I can't sing it now.

SEAWEEED. Can't sing! bless you whenever we want to catch a mermaid we only make him chant a stave, and we've twenty round the ship in the letting go of an anchor.

[Song — BLUE PETER]

All in the Downs the fleet was moor'd,

The streamers waving on the wind,
When black-ey'd Susan came on board —

Oh! where shall I my true love find?
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true,
Does my sweet William sail among you crew?

William, who high upon the yard,

Rock'd with the billows to and fro;
Soon as her well-known voice he heard,
He sigh'd and cast his eyes below.
The cord slides swiftly through his glowing hands,
And quick as lightning on the deck he stand

The boatswain gave the dreadful word,

The sails their swelling bosom spread;
No longer must she stay on board;

They kiss'd; she sighed; he hung his head
Her less'ning boat unwilling rows to land;
Adieu! she cries, and waves her lily hand.

PETER. Halloo! who have we here
Man the yards, my boys — here comes
the Captain.

CAPTAIN CROSSTREE. — SAILORS
off their hats. — LASSES curtsy]

CROSSTREE. I am sorry, my fine
to interrupt your festivities,
must aboard to-night.

To-night, your honour?

CROSSTREE. Yes! it is yet uncer-
tain that we may not be ordered to
to-morrow.

CROSSTREE. Set sail to-morrow! why the
of the Admiralty will break the
of hearts, your honour.

CROSSTREE. Where is William?

CROSSTREE. He's with Susan, your
pretty black-ey'd Susan, as
called.

CROSSTREE. With black-ey'd Susan!
that?

CROSSTREE. How, your honour? why
they are spliced together for life.

CROSSTREE. Married! I never
of this!

CROSSTREE. No? why your honour, I
that it was as well known as the
back. They were spliced before
at upon the last station. Not
t, your honour? why, many a
as the middle-watch sung the
of William and Susan.

CROSSTREE [*aside*]. Married! I
her forfeited all chance of being
Admiral. Well, my lads, you hear
vice; so make the best of your
or to-morrow you may be sailing
the water again.

SAILORS bow, go up — CROSSTREE
exits in house]

CROSSTREE. Them lords of the Admiralty
no more about pleasures of liberty,
of grog, and dancing with the
than I knows about 'stronomy.
comes William.

— Enter WILLIAM and SUSAN.
— They cheer him]

WILLIAM. Here's my shipmates,
Look at her, my hearties —
I can't give up the command of this
craft — not to be made Lord High
Admiral.

GNATBRAIN [*brings DOLLY down*].
my craft. I wouldn't give up
command of this 'ere craft to be
Lord High Gardener on.

WILLIAM. What, honest Gnatbrain,
has told me about you — give
apple! [*Shakes hands very forc-
GNATBRAIN writhes under it*]
are you looking for?

GNATBRAIN. Looking for my fingers.

WILLIAM [*takes out box*]. Here,
take a bit from St. Domingo Billy.

GNATBRAIN. From what?

[SAILORS gather round WILLIAM]

WILLIAM. From St. Domingo Billy!
I see you are taken back — steering in
a fog; well, I'll just put on my top-
lights to direct your course.

GNATBRAIN. Now, I'm a bit of a
sailor — but none of your hard words.

WILLIAM. Hard words! no, I always
speak good English. You don't think
I'm like Lieutenant Lavender, of the
lily-white schooner.

GNATBRAIN. But about St. Domingo
Billy.

WILLIAM. It's lucky for you, that
you've been good to Susan, or I shouldn't
spin you these yarns. You see it was
when the fleet was lying off St. Domingo,
in the West Indies, the crew liked new
rum and dancing with the niggers.
Well, the Admiral (a good old fellow,
and one as didn't like flogging) wouldn't
give the men liberty; some of 'em, how-
somever, would swim ashore at night,
and come off in the morning. Now,
you see, to hinder this, the Admiral
and the Captains put St. Domingo
Billy on the ship's books, and served
him out his mess every morning.

GNATBRAIN. Who was St. Domingo
Billy?

WILLIAM. Why, a shark, as long as
the Captain's gig. This shark, or
Billy — for that's what the sailors
called him — used to swim round the
fleet, and go from ship to ship, for his
biscuit and raw junk, just like a Chris-
tian.

GNATBRAIN. Well, but your 'bacco-
box, what about that?

WILLIAM. Steady! — I'm coming to
it. Well, one morning, about eight
bells, there was a black bumboat woman
aboard, with a little piccaninny, not
much longer than my hand. Well, she
sat just in the gangway, — and there
was Billy alongside, with his three decks
of grinders, ready for what might come.
Well, afore you could say about-ship,
the little black baby jumped out of its
mother's grappling, and fell into Billy's
jaws. The black woman gave a shriek
that would have split the boatswain's
whistle! Tom Gunnell saw how the
wind was: he was as fine a seaman as
ever stept — stood six feet two, and
could sit upon his pig-tail. Well, he
snatched up a knife, overboard he
jumps, and dives under Billy, and in a

minute the sea was as red as a marine; all the crew hung like a swarm of bees upon the shrouds, and when Tom came up, all over blood with the little baby in his hand, and the shark turned over dead upon its side — my eyes! such a cheer — it might have been heard at Greenwich.

DOLLY. Oh, no, William, not quite so far!

GNATBRAIN. Oh, yes, you might; that is, if the wind had blown that way very strong.

WILLIAM. We had 'em aboard, cut up Billy, and what do you think we found in him? all the watches and 'bacco-boxes as had been lost for the last ten years — an Admiral's cocked hat, and three pilot's telescopes. This is one on 'em! *[Showing box]*

GNATBRAIN. What! one of the telescopes?

WILLIAM. No, of the boxes, you lubber!

GNATBRAIN. Well, friend William, that's a tolerable yarn.

WILLIAM. True, true as the Nore Light. But come, my hearties, we are not by the galley fire — let's have a dance.

OMNES. Ay, a dance! — a dance!

[Dance — end of which, QUID enters]

QUID. Now, lads, all hands on board.

WILLIAM. On board, Master Quid! why, you are not in earnest?

QUID. Indeed, but I am: there's the first lieutenant waiting on the beach for all the liberty men.

[SAILORS and LASSES retire and converse together, bidding each other farewell]

SUSAN. Oh, William, must you leave me so early?

WILLIAM. Why, duty, you know, Susan, must be obeyed. *[Aside]* Cruise about here a little while — I'll down to the lieutenant and ax him for leave till to-morrow. Well, come along, shipmates; if so be that blue Peter must fly at the fore, why it's no use putting a black face on the matter.

[Music. — WILLIAM, SAILORS, and GIRLS, exeunt]

GNATBRAIN. This it is, you see, pretty Susan, to be married to a sailor. Now, don't you think it would be much better if William had a little cot, with

six feet square for the cultivation potatoes, than the forecastle for rearing of laurels? To be obliged leave you now!

SUSAN. Yes, but I trust he will be enabled to return; nay, there are hopes that he will gain his discharge; and then, with his prize-money, —

GNATBRAIN. Ay, I see, go into the mercantile line — take a shop for many stores. But, come along, Susan, evening is closing in — I'll see you at your cottage.

SUSAN. I thank you, good Gnatbrain, but I would, for a time, be alone.

GNATBRAIN. Ah, I see, melancholy and fond of moonlight. Well, perhaps, it's not to be wondered at. I was melancholy when I was first in love, but now I contrive to keep a light heart, though it is struck with an arrow. *[Exit]*

SUSAN. I hope he will return surely, his officer will not be so unkind as to refuse him.

[Enter CAPTAIN CROSSTREE, from I, intoxicated]

CROSSTREE *[singing]*. "Cease, ye Boreas." — Confound that fellow wine! — or mischief on that little rogue's black eyes, for one or the other of them has made sad havoc here.

SUSAN *[aside]*. The stranger off that accosted me.

CROSSTREE. Well, now for the bottle. *[Sees SUSAN]* May I never see you in water again, if this is not the very woman! My dear! my love! come here!

SUSAN. Intoxicated, too! I will hence. *[Goes]*

CROSSTREE *[staying her]*. Stop! why, what are you fluttering about? Don't you know I've found out your secret? — ha, ha! I'm your husband, Captain.

SUSAN. I'm glad of it, sir.

CROSSTREE. Are you so? well, that sounds well.

SUSAN. For I think you will give me my husband leave of absence, or, that is impossible, allow me to go on board his ship.

CROSSTREE. Go on board — that you shall! You shall go in the Captain's gig — you shall live in the Captain's cabin.

SUSAN. Sir!

CROSSTREE. Would it not be a shame for such a beautiful, black-ey'd, ten little angel as yourself to visit betwixt

Come, think of it. As for him, he's a fine fellow, certainly, but I forget him.

N. Sir, let me go!

CROSSTREE. Forget him and live. By heavens, I love you, and I have you!

N. If you are a gentleman, if you are a sailor, you will not insult a defenceless woman.

CROSSTREE. My dear, I have visited many seaports not to understand you.

I know I may be wrong, but I hurry me — the wine fires me. My eyes dart lightning into me, and you shall be mine! [*Seizes SUSAN*]

N. Let me go! in mercy! — William!

CROSSTREE. Your cries are vain! I am defenceless!

N. Monster! William, William!

Music. — She breaks away from him, and runs off; he follows and drags her back, and, as he throws her round, she shrieks]

WILLIAM, with drawn cutlass, SAILORS and GIRLS]

WILLIAM. Susan! and attacked by the pirates! Die!

Strikes CROSSTREE with cutlass, who staggers and is caught by the SAILORS. — SUSAN rushes up to WILLIAM]

ES. The Captain!

Slow music. — Tableau, and

END OF ACT FIRST

ACT II

SCENE FIRST. — *A Street in Deal.*

GNATBRAIN. — *Distant gun heard without]*

GNATBRAIN. Oh, dear! the Court is ordered: the Captains, with the Admiral at their head, are assembled on board the ship, and there goes the signal gun for the commencement of proceedings. Poor William!

[*Enter DOGGRASS*]

DOGGRASS. Poor William! aye, if I could save him, his neck would be saved. Didn't he attempt to kill his murderer?

GNATBRAIN. True; he deserves hanging for that. You would have doubtless gone a different way to work. William cut down his officer in defence of his wife — now you, like a good, prudent man, would have thrust your hands into your pockets, and looked on.

DOGGRASS. None of your sneering, sirrah. William — hanging is too good for him!

GNATBRAIN. You know best what hanging is good for — but I know this, — if all the rascals who, under the semblance of a snug respectability, sow the world with dissensions and deceit, were fitted with a halter, rope would double its price, and the executioner set up his carriage.

DOGGRASS. Have you any meaning in this?

GNATBRAIN. No — none: you can couple my meaning with your honesty.

DOGGRASS. When will your tongue change its pertness?

GNATBRAIN. When your heart changes its colour.

DOGGRASS. My heart! I have nothing to reproach myself with; I feel strong in —

GNATBRAIN. Yes, you must be strong, there's no doubting that — else you'd never be able to carry that lump of marble in your bosom — that's a load would break the back of any porter.

DOGGRASS. I tell you what, my friend, I had some thoughts —

GNATBRAIN. Stop! I'll tell you what I had only just now — a dream.

DOGGRASS. A dream?

GNATBRAIN. Aye; I dreamt that a young lamb was set upon by a wolf, when, strange to say, a lion leapt upon it, and tore it piecemeal; at this moment a band of hunters came up, and secured the noble brute: they were about to kill the lion, their guns were pointed, their swords drawn, when a thing, at first no bigger than my hand, appeared in the sky — it came closer, and I saw it was a huge vulture; it went wheeling round and round the victim lion, and appeared to anticipate the feast of blood — and with a red and glaring eye, and grasping talons, seemed to demand the carcass, ere the lion yet was dead.

DOGGRASS. And this was a dream?

GNATBRAIN. Yes, a day-dream.

DOGGRASS. And what, since you will talk, say you to the vulture?

GNATBRAIN. Nothing; but I looked at it — and with a loathing, left it.

[*Exit, looking significantly at DOGGRASS*]

DOGGRASS. I shall never sleep quietly until I lay that rascal by the heels. Confusion take him! I'm ashamed to say I am almost afraid of him.

[*Enter JACOB TWIG*]

Now, Jacob, how fares Captain Crosstree?

JACOB. Better; it is thought he will recover.

DOGGRASS. Another disappointment; yet, by the rules of the service, William must die. Here, Jacob, I've something for you to —

JACOB. I've something for you, sir.

[*Gives him money*]

DOGGRASS. Why, what's this?

JACOB. Three guineas, two shillings, and sixpence half-penny! That's just, sir, what I've received of you since I've been in your employ.

DOGGRASS. Well, and what of that?

JACOB. I don't feel comfortable with it, sir; I'd thank you to take it.

DOGGRASS. Take it! Are you mad?

JACOB. No, sir — I have been; I have been wicked, and I now think — and I wish you would think so too — that all wickedness is madness.

DOGGRASS. How is all this brought about?

JACOB. A short tale, sir; it's all with the Captain.

DOGGRASS. The Captain!

JACOB. Yes; I was in the public-house when the Captain was brought in with that gash in his shoulder; I stood beside his bed; it was steeped in blood — the doctor shook his head — the parson came and prayed; and when I looked on the Captain's blue lips and pale face, I thought what poor creatures we are; then something whispered in my heart, "Jacob, thou hast been a mischief-making, wicked lad — and suppose, Jacob, thou wert, at a moment's notice, to take the Captain's place!" I heard this — heard it as plain as my own voice — and my hair moved, and I felt as if I'd been dipped in a river, and I fell like a stone on my knees — when I got up again, I was quite another lad.

DOGGRASS. Ha, ha!

JACOB. That's not a laugh; don't deceive yourself, it sounds to my ears

like the croak of a frog, or the hoot of an owl.

DOGGRASS. Fool!

JACOB. I ran as hard as I could run. Farmer Arable — told him what a cal I was, and begged he'd hire — he did, and gave me half-a-year's wages in advance, that I might receive the money you had paid me — the money is.

DOGGRASS. Idiot! take the money.

JACOB. Every coin of it is a cockatrice's egg — it can bring forth nothing but mischief.

DOGGRASS. Take it, or I'll throw it into the sea.

JACOB. Don't, for coming from your hand, it would poison all the fishes.

DOGGRASS. You will be a fool, then.

JACOB. Yes; one of your fools, Master Doggrass — I will be honest.

DOGGRASS. All falling from me, matter. I'll wait to see William posed of; then, since the people seem leagued against me, sell off stock, and travel. The post brought this packet [*producing one*] my house, directed to Captain Crosstree. What can it contain? No matter — it is a virtue on the right side, be over-cautious; so go you into pocket, until William is settled. [*Distant gun heard without*] The cover is opened — now to watch its progress.

SCENE SECOND. — *The State Cabin of the Court Martial.* — Three Captains on each side of the cabin. — *Music.*

[*The ADMIRAL sits at the head of the table, a union-jack flying from his chair; six CAPTAINS sit on each side of the table. WILLIAM, MASTER-AT-ARMS, and MAJOR OFFICER. A MARINE at each end and one behind. A MIDSHIPMAN is in attendance*]

ADMIRAL. Prisoner, as your ship has been ordered for instant service, and it has been thought expedient that your mates should be witnesses of what punishment the Court may award if found guilty of the crime where you are charged, it will be sufficient to receive the depositions of the witnesses without calling for the attendance of Captain Crosstree, whom it is yet impossible to remove from shore. On

witnesses, I am sorry to say, is your however, out of merey to your ar situation, we have not sum-d her to attend.

LLIAM. Bless you, your honours, you! My wife, Susan, standing before me, speaking words that I send me to the fore-yard — it been too much for an old sailor. I k your honours! If I must work he dead reckoning, I wouldn't it in sight of my wife.

MIRAL. Prisoner, you are charged an attempt to slay Robert Cross-Captain of his Majesty's Navy, your superior officer. Answer, are guilty, or not guilty?

LLIAM. I want, your honour, to well between the questions. If asked, whether I wished to kill the in, I could, if I'd a mind to brag, that I loved him — loved him next y own Susan! All's one for that. not guilty of an attempt to kill the in; but, if it be guilt to strike in ee of a sailor's own sheet-anchor, fe, why I say guilty, your honour; it, and think I've no cause to hang e red at my fore.

MIRAL. You plead guilty — let s one of your judges, advise you onsider the plea. At least take nances which the hearing of your may allow.

LLIAM. I leave that chance to own hearts, your honours; if they not a good word for poor Will, it is below the honesty of a sailor upon the half tack of a lawyer.

MIRAL. You will not retract the

LLIAM. I'm fixed; anchored to it, n' aft, with chain cable.

MIRAL. Does no one of your ship- attend to speak to your char-? Have you no one?

LLIAM. No one, your honour? n't think to ask them — but let ord be passed, and may I never go if, from the boatswain to the black there's one that could spin a yarn ademn me.

MIRAL. Pass the word forward for sses.

SHIPMAN. Witnesses for the er.

Enter QUID. — Bows to Court

MIRAL. What are you?

nd. Boatswain, your honour.

ADMIRAL. What know you of the prisoner?

QUID. Know, your honour? — the trimmest sailor as ever handled rope; the first on his watch, the last to leave the deck; one as never belonged to the after-guard. He has the cleanest top, and the whitest hammock. From reefing a main-topsail to stowing a netting, give me taut Will afore any able seaman in his Majesty's fleet.

ADMIRAL. But what know you of his moral character?

QUID. His moral character, your honour? Why, he plays upon the fiddle like an angel!

ADMIRAL. Are there any other witnesses? *[Exit QUID]*

[Enter SEAWEEED]

What do you know of the prisoner?

SEAWEEED. Nothing but good, your honour.

ADMIRAL. He was never known to disobey command?

SEAWEEED. Never but once, your honours, and that was when he gave me half of his grog when I was upon the black list.

ADMIRAL. What else do you know?

SEAWEEED. Why this. I know, your honour, if William goes aloft, there's sartin promotion for him.

ADMIRAL. Have you nothing else to show? Did he ever do any great benevolent action?

SEAWEEED. Yes, he twice saved the Captain's life, and once ducked a Jew slopseller.

[ADMIRAL motions witnesses to retire. Exit SEAWEEED]

ADMIRAL. Are there any more witnesses?

WILLIAM. Your honours, I feel as if I were in irons, or seized to the grating, to stand here and listen, — like the land-lord's daughter of the Nelson, — to nothing but yarns about service and character. My actions, your honours, are kept in the log-book aloft. If, when that's overhauled, I'm not found a trim seaman, why it's only throwing salt to the fishes to patter here.

ADMIRAL. Remove the prisoner.

[Exeunt MASTER-AT-ARMS, with WILLIAM, MARINES, and MID-SHIPMAN]

Gentlemen, nothing more remains for us than to consider the justice of our

verdict. Although the case of the unfortunate man admits of many palliatives, still, for the upholding of a necessary discipline, any commiseration would afford a dangerous precedent, and I fear, cannot be indulged. Gentlemen, are you all determined on your verdict? Guilty, or not guilty? — Guilty? [*After a pause, the CAPTAINS bow assent*] It remains then for me to pass the sentence of the law? [CAPTAINS bow] Bring back the prisoner.

[*Reënter WILLIAM and MASTER-AT-ARMS*]

ADMIRAL. Prisoner — after a patient and impartial investigation of your case, this Court has unanimously pronounced you — *Guilty*. [*Pause*] If you have anything to say in arrest of judgment, — now is your time to speak.

WILLIAM. In a moment, your honours. — Damn it, my top-lights are rather misty! Your honours, I had been three years at sea, and had never looked upon or heard from my wife — as sweet a little craft as was ever launched. I had come ashore, and I was as lively as a petrel in a storm. I found Susan — that's my wife, your honours — all her gilt taken by the land-sharks; but yet all taut, with a face as red and rosy as the King's head on the side of a fire-bucket. Well, your honours, when we were as merry as a ship's crew on a pay-day, there comes an order to go aboard. I left Susan, and went with the rest of the liberty-men to ax leave of the first-lieutenant. I hadn't been gone the turning of an hour-glass, when I heard Susan giving signals of distress; I out with my cutlass, made all sail, and came up to my craft. I found her battling with a pirate. I never looked at his figure-head, never stopped — would any of your honours? Long live you and your wives, say I! Would any of your honours have rowed alongside as if you'd been going aboard a royal yacht? No, you wouldn't; for the gilt swabs on the shoulders can't alter the heart that swells beneath; you would have done as I did; and what did I? why, I cut him down like a piece of old junk. Had he been the first lord of the Admiralty, I had done it!

[*Overcome with emotion*]

ADMIRAL. Prisoner, we keenly feel for your situation; yet you, as a good

sailor, must know that the course of justice cannot be evaded.

WILLIAM. Your honours, let me no bar to it; I do not talk for my life. Death! why, if I 'scaped it here, — the next capful of wind might blow me from the yard-arm. All I would strive for, is to show I had no malice; and I wish whilst you pass sentence, is your pity; that, your honours, whilst it is your duty to condemn the sailor, may as having wives you honour and children you love, respect the husband.

ADMIRAL. Have you anything further to advance?

WILLIAM. All my cable is run out. I'm brought to.

ADMIRAL [*all the CAPTAINS rise*] Prisoner! it is now my most painful duty to pass the sentence of the Court upon you. The Court commiserates your situation; and, in consideration of your services, will see that every cable is taken of your wife when deprived of your protection.

WILLIAM. Poor Susan!

ADMIRAL. Prisoner! your case falls under the twenty-second Article of War. [*Reads*] "If any man in, belonging to the Fleet, shall draw, offer to draw, or lift up his hand against his superior officer, he shall suffer death [*Putting on his hat*] The sentence of the Court is, that you be hanged at the fore-yard-arm of this, his Majesty's ship, at the hour of ten o'clock. Heaven pardon your sins, and have mercy on your soul! This Court is now dissolved."

[*Musical. — ADMIRAL and CAPTAINS come forward. — ADMIRAL shakes hands with WILLIAM, who, overcome, kneels. — After a momentary struggle he rises, collects himself, and is escorted from the cabin in the same way that he entered. The scene closes. — Gun fired.*]

SCENE THIRD. — *The Gun-room of WILLIAM'S Ship. Tomahawks crossed, and fire-buckets in a row. Music.*

[*Enter LIEUTENANT PIKE, two MARINES, WILLIAM, MASTER-AT-ARMS, followed by QUID and SEAWEED*]

PIKE. Now, William, what cheer?

WILLIAM. Water-logged, your honour — my heart's sprung a-leak — I'm three feet water in the hold.

KE. Come, summon all your mess.

WILLIAM. I will, your honour; but then I couldn't help thinking that I used to keep the middle watch for you, I never thought it would come to this.

KE. But you are a brave fellow, William, and fear not death.

WILLIAM. Death! No — since I trod the King's oak, he has been at me. I have slept near him, heeded near him — he has looked at my face, and saw I shrunk not. In storm I have heeded him not — the fury of the battle I thought not of. Had I been mowed down by cutlass, my shipmates, as they thrown me to the sharks, would have given me a parting look of friend — and over their grog have said I did duty. This, your honour, would not have been death, but lying-up in orry. But to be swayed up like a gib, to dry — the whole fleet — nay, folks of Deal, people that knew me, to pat me on the head when a boy, and these looking at me! Oh, thank heaven, my mother's dead!

KE. Come, William. *[Shakes his head]* There, think no more after this fashion. Are there any of your shipmates, on whom you would wish bestow something?

WILLIAM. Thankee, your honour. Lieutenant — I know you won't despise a gift because it comes from one who lived the forecastle — here's my box keep it for poor Will's sake — you, your honour, have laid yard-arm yard-arm with many a foe — let us see we shall come gunwale to gunwale another climate. *[Gives him box. — MARINE OFFICER]* Your honour's ship — blue Peter's flying — the vessel has her anchor a-trip, and must get under way for the ocean of duty. Your honour will have to take me to the launching place. You must give a ship a bad name because she went awkwardly off the stocks. Here this, your honour. *[Opens watch]* The paper was cut by Susan's fingers ere we left the Downs; take it, your honour, I can't look at it. Master William, take this for my sake. *[Gives Susan's watch and seals, among which is a bullet]* I see that bullet — preserve that rather than the gold. That ball was saved by Harry Trunnion in defence of me. I was disarmed, and the enemy

was about to fire, when Harry threw himself before me, and received that bullet in his breast. I took it flattened from his dead body — have worn it about me — it has served to remind me that Harry suffered for my sake, and that it was my duty, when chance might serve, to do the like for another.

PIKE. And now, William, have you any request to make?

WILLIAM. Lieutenant, you see this locket. *[Points to locket at his neck]* It is Susan's hair. When I'm in dock, don't let it be touched: I know you won't. You have been most kind to me, Lieutenant, and if those who go aloft may know what passes on the high sea, I shall yet look down upon you in the middle-watch, and bless you. Now, one word more. How fares the Captain?

PIKE. Very ill. So ill that he has been removed from the command, and the first lieutenant acts until the new Captain arrives.

WILLIAM. His case, then, is desperate. Well, if he goes out of commission, I can't tremble to meet him. I bear no malice, your honour — I loved the Captain.

PIKE. You have nothing to ask?

WILLIAM. Nothing, your honour. Susan and some friends will shortly be on board. All I want is, that I may ask for strength to see my wife — my poor, young, heart-broken wife, for the last time, and then die like a seaman and a man. *[Music. — LIEUTENANT PIKE, QUID, SEAWEED, and MARINES, exeunt]* I am soon to see poor Susan! I should like, first, to beat all my feelings to quarters, that they may stand well to their guns, in this their last engagement. I'll try and sing that song, which I have many a time sung in the mid-watch — that song which has often placed my heart, though a thousand miles at sea, at my once happy home. *[WILLIAM sings a verse of "Black-Ey'd Susan"]* My heart is splitting! *[SUSAN shrieks without — rushes in, and throws herself into WILLIAM's arms]*

Oh, Susan! Well, my poor wench, how fares it?

SUSAN. Oh, William! and I have watched, prayed for your return — smiled in the face of poverty, stopped my ears to the reproaches of the selfish, the worse pity of the thoughtless — and all, all for this!

WILLIAM. Ay, Sue, it's hard! but

that's all over — to grieve is useless. Susan, I might have died disgraced — have left you the widow of a bad, black-hearted man. I know 'twill not be so — and in this, whilst you remain behind me, there is at least some comfort. I died in a good cause; I died in defence of the virtue of a wife — her tears will fall like spring rain on the grass that covers me.

SUSAN. Talk not so — your grave! I feel it is a place where my heart must throw down its heavy load of life.

WILLIAM. Come, Susan, shake off your tears. There, now, smile a bit — we'll not talk again of graves. Think, Susan, that I am a-going on a long foreign station — think so. Now, what would you ask? — have you nothing, nothing to say?

SUSAN. Nothing! Oh, when at home, hoping, yet trembling for this meeting, thoughts crowded on me; I felt as if I could have talked to you for days — stopping for want of power, not words. Now, the terrible time is come — now I am almost tongue-tied — my heart swells to my throat — I can but look and weep. *[Gun fires]* That gun! Oh, William! husband! is it so near? You speak not — tremble!

WILLIAM. Susan, be calm. If you love your husband, do not send him on the deck a white-faced coward. Be still, my poor girl, I have something to say — until you are calm, I will not utter it; now, Susan —

SUSAN. I am cold, motionless as ice.

WILLIAM. Susan! you know the old aspen that grows near to the church porch. You and I, when children, almost before we could speak plainly, have sat and watched and wondered at its shaking leaves. I grew up, and that tree seemed to me a friend that loved me, yet had not the tongue to tell me so. Beneath its boughs our little arms have been locked together — beneath its boughs I took the last kiss of your white lips, when hard fortune made me turn sailor. I cut from that tree this branch. *[Produces it]* Many a summer's day aboard, I've lain in the top and looked at these few leaves, until I saw green meadows in the salt sea, and heard the bleating of the sheep. When I am dead, Susan, let me be laid under that tree — let me —

[Gun fires. — SUSAN falls. — Slow Music. — LIEUTENANT PIKE and SEAWEED enter. — WILLIAM gives SUSAN in charge of SEAWEED, takes his handkerchief off, ties it around her neck, kisses her, and she is carried off. — LIEUTENANT PIKE and WILLIAM exeunt]

SCENE FOURTH. — *The Forecastle of the Ship. — Procession along the starboard gangway. — MASTER-AT-ARMS, with a drawn sword under his arm, point next to the prisoner. — WILLIAM, without his neckcloth. — MARINES, OFFICER OF MARINES ADMIRAL, CAPTAIN, LIEUTENANTS and MIDSHIPMEN. — A SAILOR standing at one of the fore-castle guns with the lock-string in his hand. — A platform extends from the cat-head to the fore rigging. — Music.*

MASTER-AT-ARMS. Prisoner, are you prepared?

WILLIAM. Bless you! bless you all —

[Mounts the platform. CAPTAIN CROSSTREE rushes on from gangway]

CROSSTREE. Hold! hold!

ADMIRAL. Captain Crosstree — retire, sir, retire.

CROSSTREE. Never! If the prisoner be executed, he is a murdered man. I alone am the culprit — 'twas I who would have dishonoured him.

ADMIRAL. This cannot plead here — he struck a superior officer.

CROSSTREE. No.

OMNES. No?

CROSSTREE. He saved my life; I had written for his discharge — villainy has kept back the document — 'tis here dated back. When William struck me he was not the King's sailor — I was not his officer.

ADMIRAL *[taking the paper. — Music]*. He is free!

[The SEAMEN give three cheers. — WILLIAM leaps from the platform. — SUSAN is brought on by CAPTAIN CROSSTREE]

CURTAIN

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

(1839)

BY SIR EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

(1803-1873)

BULWER-LYTTON represents all that is false, shallow, and insincere in the history of the early nineteenth century English drama. Both as a novelist and as a playwright, he measures up to the reputation of a dandy which his social position encouraged.

Critics never took Bulwer-Lytton seriously; the very insincerity with which he intermittently assumed interest in the current topics of the day, marked him as a dandy. Knowing certain characteristics in the actor, Macready, it is easily understandable why he should turn to Bulwer for those theatrical effects and those wholly impossible pieces which were the rage of the English theatre of the '30's and '40's.

Bulwer's name is identified with the freeing of the English theatre which took place by Act of Parliament in 1832, when the power of the "patent" theatres was broken, and the sway of Macready was shaken by the rampant democracy which swept over the theatre as soon as Parliament had passed the acts which Bulwer-Lytton championed. Let us recall that Macready had made a pathetic appeal to Brown: "Write me a play," he said, "and keep me from going to America." One might take this as the first incentive toward play-writing given to the poet. The vanity of Macready himself, his vain striving to be identified with the brilliant actors of his period, the jealousies and vanities reflected in his management, are not so different from the fopperies of Bulwer-Lytton, who was continually courting the social success of his day, and pretending that he was a deep, penetrative student of his contemporaries.

Macready's association with Bulwer brought forth no deep results. The theatrical pieces which Bulwer began writing in 1837 were reflective of all that was in the air in the school of Victor Hugo and Alexander Dumas, *père*. No critic takes much account of his seriously, not even his historical treatment, which was riddled with excesses and distortions. But the stage often gives the lie to the most just estimate of a man. False as brass may be Bulwer's "The Lady of Lyons", "Richelieu", and his "Money", but none the less have they held the English theatre for nearly a century because of their theatricalism. They are externally effective though their psychology never holds. They are dependent on romantic situations that defy logical explanation, and they are replete with those whisperings, "asides", those jugglings with important documents, those excesses of emotional change from saintliness to villainy, which the London public of Bulwer's day allowed itself into believing were probable and possible.

The story is told that Bulwer's first play, "Duchess de la Vallière", was offered to the manager, Bunn, in 1836, on condition that it should be accepted without a reading. That was the self-importance of him, and Bunn treated him with a flat refusal. It was given at Covent Garden with Farren, Miss Faucit, and Macready in the cast. After this, Macready produced Browning's "Strafford",

and when he himself undertook the management of Covent Garden, it was his labours at trying to overcome the effective work of the Select Committee on Dramatic Literature which, in 1832, had released the monopoly from the "patent" theatres. It must be recalled that Macready's repertory from 1823-1837 included such characters as *Caius Gracchus*, *William Tell*, *Virginus*, *Rob Roy*, *Ion*. These, apart from his Shakespearean rôles, are reflective of the measure which he would adopt as a manager. Spectacular romance, as Archer says in his "Life of Macready," with sombre castles and shadowy halls, was the order of the day. In one respect he kept up the traditions of a distinctive line of actors. His Shakespearean productions aimed at rich and detailed garniture.

It was after his production of "King Lear" that Macready produced "The Lady of Lyons", a play by Bulwer, announced on the programme as anonymous and written by him during 1838, in a little over two weeks. A preface to the first edition of the printed play made confession that the plot was based on a tale entitled "The Bellows Mender." The piece met with immediate success, and has, strange to say, been a drawing card for many generations, even attracting such an artist as Henry Irving, who produced it, with all his care and imaginative forcefulness, on April 17, 1879.

Bulwer had been approached by the actor in the early summer of 1838, and a letter, dated September, 1838, shows that he has been giving serious consideration to Macready's request for him to write a play. The communication runs as follows:

My dear Macready,

I have thought of a subject. The story full of incident and interest. It is to this effect. In the time of Louis XIII. The Chevalier de Marillac is the wittiest and bravest gentleman, celebrated for his extravagant valour and his enthusiasm for enjoyment; but in his most mirthful moments a dark cloud comes over him at one name — the name of Richelieu. He confides to his friend Cinq Mars the reason, viz., he had once entered into a conspiracy against Richelieu: Richelieu discovered and sent for him. "Chevalier de Marillac," said he, "I do not desire to shed your blood on the scaffold, but you must die. Here is a command on the frontier; fall in battle." He went to the post, but met glory, and not death. Richelieu, reviewing the troops, found him still living, and said, "Remember, the sword is over your head. I take your parole to appear before me once a quarter. You can still find death. I will give you time for it." Hence his extravagant valour; hence his desire to make the most of life. While making this confidence to Cinq Mars, he is sent for by Richelieu. He goes as to death. Richelieu receives him sternly, reminds him of his long delay, upbraids him for his profligate life, etc. Marillac answers with mingled wit and nobleness; and at last, instead of sentencing him to death, Richelieu tells him that he has qualities that make him wish to attach him to himself, and that he will marry him to a girl with a great dowry, and give him high office at Court. He must marry directly. Marillac goes out enchanted.

Now, Richelieu's motive is this: Louis XIII. has fallen in love with this girl, Louise de la Porte, and wishes to make her his mistress. All the King's mistresses have hitherto opposed Richelieu. He is resolved that the King shall have no more. He will have no rival with the King. He therefore resolves to

her to Marillac, whose life is in his power, whom he can hold in command, whom he believes to be too noble to suffer the adulterous connec-

Marillac is then introduced, just married, with high appointments and a dowry, the girl beautiful, when, on his wedding-day, Cinq Mars tells him the King loves his wife. His rage and despair — conceives himself duped. He is with the girl, in which he recoils from her. Suddenly three knocks at the door. He is sent for by the King, and despatched to a distance; the bride, wived, is summoned to Court.

Marillac, all pride and wrath, and casting all upon Richelieu, agrees to conspire against the Cardinal's life. The fortress where Richelieu lodges is garrisoned with the friends of the conspirators. Just as he has agreed, he receives an anonymous letter telling him that his wife is at Chantilly; that she will sleep in the chamber of the Montmorencies; that Louis means to enter the room that night; that if he wishes to guard his honour, he can enter the palace by a secret passage which opens in a picture of Hugo de Montmorenci, the duke, who had been beheaded by Louis (an act for which the King always repented). This Montmorenci had been the most intimate friend of Marillac and had left him his armour as a present. A thought strikes Marillac, and he goes off the stage.

Louise alone in this vast room — the picture of Montmorenci in complete armour — a bed at the end. She complains of her husband's want of love, and laments her hard fate — dismisses her women. The King enters and locks the doors; after supplication and resistance on her part, he advances to the picture, when from Montmorenci's picture comes a cry of "Hold!" and the form descends from the panel and interposes. The King, horror-stricken and superstitious, flies; Louise faints. The form is Marillac. While she is still insensible, the clock strikes; it is the hour he is to meet the conspirators. He summons her women, and leaves her.

Richelieu alone at night when Marillac enters to him, tells him his life is in his power, upbraids him for his disgrace, etc. Richelieu informs him that he has persuaded him to Louise to prevent her dishonour, that he had sent the anonymous letter, etc., and converts Marillac into gratitude. But what is to be done? The conspirators have filled the fortress. They (Richelieu and Marillac) retire into another room, and presently the conspirators enter the one they had left, and Marillac joins them and tells them the Cardinal is dead, that he has been seen to the funeral, etc., and they had better go at once and announce it to the King, and that there are no marks of violence, that it seems like a fit (being a precaution).

Scene in the Streets of Paris.

The King, who had always feared and hated Richelieu, hears the news, and is at first rejoiced, the courtiers delighted, Paris in a jubilee. But suddenly comes news of commotion, riot; messengers announce the defeat of the armies; the Spaniards have crossed the frontiers, his general, De Feuguieres, is slain; a mob and uproar without, with cries of "Hurrah! the old Cardinal is dead," when there is a counter-cry of "The Cardinal, the Cardinal!" and a band of soldiers appear, followed by Richelieu himself in complete armour. At this point, the confusion, the amaze, etc., the mob changes humours, and there is a cry of "Long live the great Cardinal!"

Scene, the King's chamber.

The King, enraged at the trick played on him, and at his having committed himself to joy at the Cardinal's death, hears that De Marillac had announced the false report, orders him to the Bastille, tells the Count de Charost to forbid Richelieu the Louvre, and declares henceforth he will reign alone. Joy of the anti-Cardinalists, when the great doors are thrown open, and Richelieu, pale, suffering, sick, in his Cardinal's robes, leaning on his pages, enters and calls Charost (the very man who is to forbid his entrance) to give him his arm, which Charost tremblingly does before the eyes of the King! Richelieu and the King alone. Richelieu says he has come to tender his resignation, the King accepts it, and Richelieu summons six secretaries groaning beneath sacks of public papers, all demanding immediate attention. Richelieu retires to a distance, and appears almost dying. The King desperately betakes himself to the papers, his perplexity, bewilderment, and horror at the dangers round him. At last he summons the Cardinal to his side and implores him to resume the office. The Cardinal, with great seeming reluctance, says he only will on one condition, — complete power over foes and friends; Louis must never again interfere with public business. He then makes him sign various papers and when all is done the old man throws off the dying state, rises with lion-like energy: "France is again France — to the Frontiers. I lead the armies," etc. (a splendid burst). Louis, half enfeebled, half ashamed, retires. Richelieu alone, gives various papers to the secretaries, and summons Marillac and his wife. He asks her if she has been happy, she says "No," thinking her husband hates her; puts the same question to Marillac, who, thinking she wishes to be separated, says the same. He then tells them as the marriage has not been fulfilled they can be divorced. They wofully agree, when turning to Marillac he shows him the King's order that he should go to the Bastille, and then adds that in favour of his service in saving his (Richelieu's) life, he has the power to soften his sentence, but he must lose his offices at Court and go into exile. On hearing this Louise turns round — her love breaks out — she will go with him into banishment, and the reconciliation is complete. Richelieu, regarding them, then adds: "Your sentence remains the same — we banish you still — Ambassador to Austria."

An entry in Macready's diary for November 15, 1838, records the fact that he had read the greater part of Bulwer's "*Richelieu*", which, "though excellent in part is deficient in the important point of continuity of interest." During the day he continued his reading, and feared the play would not do because it could not be made effective. Bulwer had sent the manuscript to the manager with a note saying:

Acts one and three may require a little shortening, but you are a master at that. The rest average the length of the acts in "*The Lady of Lyons*." I hope the story is clear. The domestic interest is not so strong as in "*The Lady*", but I think the acting of *Richelieu's* part may counterbalance this defect. For the rest I say of this, as of "*The Lady*", if at all hazardous or uncertain, it must not be acted, and I must try again.

Evidently, Bulwer did not at first send Macready the complete manuscript, for an entry on November 21 in the actor's diary states that Bulwer called, bringing with him the completed "*Richelieu*", and continues:

I begin to be deadened to the interest of its story ; it seems to be occasionallyorthy. I fear it has not the clinging interest of his present successful play, hope and trust are good supporters.

Macready pondered a long time over the possibilities of the play, and, on November 5, began reading and punctuating and cutting it. His work had reached a point during the day, when he decided to read it to Bulwer and Forster, was the friend of Dickens. But he was disappointed in the effect produced, he confessed that when he had reached the fifth act, Forster was sound asleep. The situation was one which cut deep into the vanity of Bulwer, who left, Macready very much hurt. Between that time and December 16 the play was entirely rewritten, and Macready found it greatly improved, but not quite to that where it meant success. Notwithstanding his doubts, he invited a party of friends, among them Browning and Blanchard, to a reading of the play on December 16. Pencil and paper were given to each person present, and they were asked to state their criticisms without interrupting the reading by conversation. The result of opinion was that the manuscript was a good one, and Macready, very graciously, forwarded these communications to the author. Bulwer replied with a misgivings :

The result is encouraging. But at the risk of seeming over fearful, I must also say that it is not decisive. . . . Browning's short line of "The play's the thing" is a laconism that may mean much or little. Besides he wants experience. Were I myself certain of the dramatic strength of the play (as I was in the case of "The Lady of Lyons"), I would at once decide on the experiment from the opinions you have collected. But I own I am doubtful, though hopeful, of the degree of dramatic strength in it; and I remain just as irresolute now as I was before. I fancy that the effect on the stage of particular scenes can be conveyed by reading. Thus in the fifth act the grouping of all the characters around *Richelieu*, the effect of his sudden recovery, etc. No reader, I think, can accurately gauge the probable effect of this. And in the sixth act the clinging of *Julie* to *Richelieu*, the protection he gives her, etc., I have, I imagine, the physical effect of making the audience forget whether she is her father or not. There they are before you, flesh and blood, the old man and the young bride involved in the same fate, and creating the sympathy of a domestic relation. More than all my dependence on the stage, is my reliance on the acting of *Richelieu* himself, the embodiment of the portraiture, the look, the gesture, the personation, which reading cannot give. But still I may easily overrate all this. For if the play do fail in interest, the character may reward the actor, but not suffice to carry off the play, especially as he is always on the stage. On the whole, therefore, I am unable to give a decisive vote; and I leave it to you with this assurance, that if it be withdrawn you shall have another play by the end of February.

And through these preliminary negotiations, Bulwer was never confident of his ability. What he aimed at was not a literary production but a popular success, he was not even willing to have faith in his own powers. At one time he wrote to Macready :

I begin to despair of the play and of myself. Unless, therefore, upon consideration, you see clearly what at present seems doubtful, the triumphant

effect of the portraiture and action of *Richelieu* himself, you had better return me the play; and if I can form myself in a new school of art, and unlearn all that tact and thought have hitherto taught me, I will attempt another. But for this year you must do without me.

Macready did not let the matter drop, however. He was too confident of his own ability to raise the play to the point of success, and he began making suggestions which were combated at every turn by Bulwer. Macready declares, however, that

When I developed the object of the whole plan of alterations, he was in ecstasies. I never saw him so excited, several times exclaiming he was "enchanted" with the plan, and observed in high spirits, "What a fellow you are!"

Bulwer had not reckoned without his host. Even as he liked to be flattered so in turn he knew when to flatter; and it is not surprising to find Macready claiming, after Bulwer had left him one day, — "What a fine man he is!"

Sober judgment, however, made Macready change his point of view about the manuscript. He wrote a hasty note to Bulwer, claiming, so Molloy records, "that his play would have been valuable from any other person, but that it would not serve his interest, whether in reference to his literary fame, his station, or his political position."

To which Bulwer instantly replied:

I fully appreciate the manly and generous friendship you express so well, and have only one way to answer it. I had intended to turn to some other work already before me. But I will now lay all by, and neither think of, nor labour at anything else, until something or other be done to realize our common object. Send me back "*Richelieu*"; and if you think it possible, either by alterations or by throwing the latter acts overboard altogether, to produce such situations as may be triumphant, we will try again. The historical character of *Richelieu* is not to be replaced, and is therefore worth preserving. But if neither of us can think of such situations, we must lay his Eminence on the shelf and try something else.

It was in this spirit that "*Richelieu*" was rewritten, and brought to the judgment of Browning and Blanchard.

But there was another supreme test to which the play was put, through the proposal of Bulwer. Molloy records the following:

Do you recollect [he asks Macready] that passage in *The Confessions*, when Rousseau, haunted by vague fear that he was destined to be damned, resolved to convince himself one way or the other; and taking up a stone shied it at a tree? If the stone hit, he was to be saved; if it missed, he was to be damned. Luckily it hit the tree, and Rousseau walked away with his mind perfectly at ease. Let us follow this notable example. Our tree shall be in the greenroom. You shall shy at the actors. If it hit the mark, well and good. If not, we shall know our fate. To speak literally, I accept your proposal to abide by the issue of a reading to the actors; though I remember that the jury anticipated great things from "*La Vallière*", and I think they generally

re according as they like their parts. The general tone of your friendly generous letter induces me, indeed, to release you at once from the responsibility of the decision, and to say boldly that I am prepared to have the play acted. It can therefore be read with that impression to the greenroom, if it does not take there, why it will not be too late to retreat. If it does, I can only say *Make ready! Present! Fire!* All I could doubt was the theatrical interest of the story. Your account reassured me on that point, and therefore you will have fair play for your own art and genius in the pre-eminent character.

The beginning of the new year brought the finished manuscript of "*Richelieu*" to Bulwer, and, by January 5, Macready was pleased to find that the play excited interest "in a very extraordinary manner", when he came to read the script to the company.

On the ninth of the month he had decided to produce the play without any further delay, and, as was his custom, started work on the punctuation. By January 20, he was deep in a consideration of the character of *Richelieu*, whom he found that Bulwer had made particularly difficult, because of inconsistency. He was

Bulwer has made him resort to low jest, which outrages one's notions of the ideal of Cardinal Richelieu, with all his vanity and suppleness and craft.

The actor evidently placed himself under the tutelage of Bulwer, for the latter gave him a list of books to read on the Cardinal's character. The deeper he got into the work, the more discouraged he became, until he finally reached the conclusion that in order to give reality to the character of *Richelieu*, he must fabricate much of his interpretation. As the month of February progressed, the work of rehearsals grew more and more arduous. Bulwer called his attention, during the course of the preparations, to the following:

"I know not if you conceive *Richelieu's* illness (Act V.) as I do? I do not regard it for a show illness. He is really ill, though he may exaggerate a little. When they are going to tear France from him, they do really tug at his heart-strings. He is really near fainting at the prospect of his experiment with the medicines: and it is the mind invigorating the body, it is the might of France entering into him, which effects the cure. If there be delusion, it is all sublimed and exalted by the high-hearted truth at the bottom of it.

William Archer has recorded that, when the play was first conceived by Bulwer, the part of *De Mauprat* was designed for Macready.

The piece was presented, for the first time, at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, on Thursday, March 7, 1839.

Macready notes the event in his diary record for March 8, 1839. He writes:

"I saw the papers. The *Morning Chronicle* was as usual most kind and eulogistic; the *Times*, although trying to damn with faint praise, admitting much more than I expected, and enough to give to its readers, who know its baseness, the assurance of success. Went to the theatre, where I cut the play with the performers, and expressed myself much obliged by their zeal and industry. When we had separated, Bulwer came and altered all that we had arranged — annoying and disconcerting me very much. I struggled for the omission of

several passages, but he was triumphant, and therefore no longer so *docile* as had heretofore found him.

A first-night impression of the play is contained in Westland Marston's ("Recent Actors.")

On March 13, one notes a change of heart in Macready, due to the annoyance of the dramatist:

Two long notes from Bulwer — with more last words — and a lengthy criticism on some points of my performance, in which he wishes me to substitute coarse and vulgar attempt at low farcical point in one instance, and melodramatic rant in another for the more delicate shadings of character that I endeavour to give. I have long had surmises about Bulwer's taste from several things in the comedy of "La Vallière" — in the original of "The Lady of Lyons" and in the original copy of this play. I am *sure* that his taste is not to be depended on.

The letter referred to runs as follows:

March 13, 1839.

My dear Macready,

I saw a good deal of the play last night, which went off better than on Monday. The restitution of the second scene, Act III, was quite right. I wish time could allow a little of the comic part, Act II. It is missed, and has been complained of to me in *many* quarters. But, perhaps, at all events it is too late to re-alter, even if time could be spared.

I wish to say I was much more struck by your acting in the three last acts to-night than even heretofore, and so, I think, was the House generally. Forgive me if I say that the *more* you come out from subdued dryness into power (which you did to-night) the more brilliant your success will be, and the more you will realize the Cardinal — "*colère et orgueilleux dont chaque pensée avait tout le *chaleur* d'une passion.*" De Vigny was wrong in thinking him *sec*; there was plenty of animal spirits in him. In the grave part of your performance I see only one sentence in which I could wish another conception. It is the end of the act — where you say "away with him." Now you speak "away with him" with contemptuous sport, like a man brushing away a trifle. The audiences, however, are prepared for something much more vehement — and the thought of your conception is almost too subtle for the gigantic audiences you have — but I think it would be more like the Cardinal, who is accustomed to come and feast over the execution of his foes, to throw more of the deadly force of malignant and exulting vindictiveness into the words — something more to correspond with his laugh in baffling the murderers at the castle. I would have him release the devil of his rage upon his victim. I would make him follow with eyes that threaten savage victory the retreating form of Baradas — in fact, here I would have the effect that of power, the closing power of the speech. In the comic part (you must pardon my presumption in this) I must still fancy that greater breadth of humour — more of what the French call *malice* — would illustrate the character more vividly and be infinitely more effective. I fancy the *Cardinal* with a CHUCKLE — "*Il rit presque gai, mais toujours insultant*" — which is ascribed to him. Thus in "Colonel and Nobleman, my bashful Huguet, that can never be" — if it

be said with a more jovial laugh, and then with a pointed slyness (no se, but fronting the audience) and almost a wink of the eye to *Joseph*, "I'll promise," etc., — this, I think, would be more effective. So after he has

Huguet he may be noble, why not let him exchange a broad, humorous see with *Joseph*, whom he passes at the moment, as much as to say, "There isn't that cleverly done?" In "*Joseph, Bishop Joseph*," I think it will be much more effective if you don't repeat *Joseph* twice — but make the point sudden and hearty, "Ah *Joseph — Bishop Joseph*," and absolutely touch ribs with the forefinger; there should, I am sure, be no pause and no reiteration between *Joseph* and *Bishop Joseph*. Now I have said eno' to make you look me the most presuming dog you have ever seen thrusting his paw into other people's paniers! But, mon cher, you have been as frank with me — so no more tat.

May I further beg you to IM-PLORE Miss Faucit to say, "I love AND I am a woman"; and with as much majestic swelling as she can; to-night she says, "I love but I am a woman," which is nonsense, and she whined it into the baritone.

Think as leniently as you can of my suggestions.

Yrs. ever,

E. L. B.

H. of C.

Tuesday night.

The next day Bulwer was proposing the subject for another play to Macready. One of the most interesting tasks in dramatic history is to follow the variations in interpretation of a part as recorded in different theatrical annals. It is an easy matter for the theatrical student to assemble the dramatic criticisms which record impressions of the acting of Macready, Phelps, Irving, and Edwin Booth in the part of *Richelieu*. It is a part essentially theatrical — one of the same proportions as Shakespeare's *Cardinal Wolsey* and Tennyson's *Becket*, but one that is more dependent than either of the other two on the imaginative fire poured into it by the actor.

For the mould of "*Richelieu*", as shaped by Bulwer, is a very flimsy conceit, made up of trite philosophies and violent situations. The melodramatic character of the piece and the false poetic dialogue did not add to its dignity, although one can imagine the theatrical effectiveness of the "curse of Rome" speech, and of the sincere sentiments regarding the *Cardinal's* love of France. Bulwer has here dealt with plot and intrigue, and has so distorted history that one can scarcely take the play as a true historical drama. It is only when *Richelieu* is assumed by an actor of high imaginative power, like Irving, or of big emotional scope like Booth, that the part rises above its shallowness and empty verbosity. Yet, even in reading, the effectiveness of the scenes strikes one quite as much as the lack of historical truth.¹

W. H.utton Cook refers to Thackeray's review of "*Richelieu*" in *Fraser's Magazine*, in which the play is spoken of as filled with "disagreeable bustle and petty complication of intrigue."

RICHELIEU;
OR,
THE CONSPIRACY

By E. BULWER-LYTTON

TO THE
MARQUIS OF LANDSDOWNE, K.G.,
&c., &c.

THIS DRAMA
IS INSCRIBED IN TRIBUTE
TO THE TALENTS WHICH COMMAND
AND
THE QUALITIES WHICH ENDEAR
RESPECT

LONDON, MARCH 5TH, 1839.

PREFACE TO RICHELIEU

THE administration of Cardinal Richelieu, whom (despite all his darker qualities) Voltaire and History justly consider the true architect of the French monarchy and the great parent of French civilization, is characterized by features alike tragic and comic. A weak king — an ambitious favourite; a despicable conspiracy against the minister, nearly always associated with a dangerous treason against the State — these, with little variety of names and dates, constitute the eventful cycle through which, with a dazzling ease and an arrogant confidence, the great luminary fulfilled its destinies. Blent together, in startling contrast, we see the grandest achievements and the pettiest agents; — the spy — the mistress — the capuchin; — the destruction of feudalism; — the humiliation of Austria; the dismemberment of Spain.

Richelieu himself is still what he was in his own day — a man of two characters. If, on the one hand, he is justly represented as inflexible and vindictive, crafty and unscrupulous; so, on the other, it cannot be denied that he was placed in times which the long impunity of every license required stern examples — that he was beset by perils and intrigues, which gave a certain excuse to the subtlest inventions of self-defence — that his ambition was inseparably connected with a passionate love for the glory of his country — and that, if he was her dictator, he was not her benefactor. It has been fairly remarked by the most impartial historians, that he was no less generous to merit than severe to crime — that, in the various departments of the State, the Army, and the Church, he selected and distinguished the ablest aspirants — that the wars which he conducted were, for the most part, essential to the preservation of France, and Europe itself, from the formidable encroachments of the Austrian House — that, in spite of those wars, the people were

oppressed with exorbitant imposts — and that he left the kingdom he had
ned in a more flourishing and vigorous state than at any former period of the
h history, or at the decease of Louis XIV.

ne cabals formed against this great statesman were not carried on by the pa-
sm of public virtue, or the emulation of equal talent: they were but Court
gles, in which the most worthless agents had recourse to the most desperate
s. In each, as I have before observed, we see combined the twofold attempt
rder the minister and to betray the country. Such, then, are the agents, and
he designs, with which truth, in the Drama as in History, requires us to contrast
lebrated Cardinal; — not disguising his foibles or his vices, but not unjust to
ander qualities (especially the love of country), by which they were often
ied, and, at times, redeemed.

ne historical drama is the concentration of historical events. In the attempt
ce upon the stage the picture of an era, that license with dates and details,
a Poetry permits, and which the highest authorities in the Drama of France
f have sanctioned, has been, though not unsparingly, indulged. The con-
y of the Duc de Bouillon is, for instance, amalgamated with the dénouement of
Day of Dupes"; and circumstances connected with the treason of Cinq Mars
se brilliant youth and gloomy catastrophe tend to subvert poetic and historie
e by seducing us to forget his base ingratitude and his perfidious apostasy)
identified with the fate of the earlier favourite *Baradas*, whose sudden rise and
dden fall passed into a proverb. I ought to add, that the noble romance of
Mars suggested one of the scenes in the fifth act; and that for the conception
ne portion of the intrigue connected with *De Mauprat* and *Julie*, I am, with
alterations of incident, and considerable if not entire reconstruction of char-
indebted to an early and admirable novel by the author of "*Picciola*."

don, March, 1839.

NOTE

ne length of the Play necessarily requires curtailments on the Stage — the
ges thus omitted are those inserted with inverted commas. Many of the
ges thus left out, however immaterial to the audience, must obviously be such
e reader would be least inclined to dispense with — viz., those which, without
absolutely essential to the business of the Stage, contain either the subtler
es of character, or the more poetical embellishments of description. A more
rtant consequence of these suppressions is, that Richelieu himself is left too
and too unrelievedly to positions which place him in an *amiable* light, without
shadowing forth of his more sinister motives and his fiercer qualities which is
pted in the written play. Thus, the *character* takes a degree of credit due
to the *situation*. To judge the Author's conception of *Richelieu* fairly, and to
ate how far it is consistent with historical portraiture, the play must be *read*.

CAST OF RICHELIEU AS FIRST PRESENTED AT THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN

LOUIS, THE THIRTEENTH	Mr. Elton
GASTON, DUKE OF ORLEANS	<i>brother to Louis XIII</i> . . . Mr. Didear
BARADAS	<i>favourite of the King, first gentleman of the Chamber, Premier, Ecuyer, etc.</i> . . Mr. Warde
CARDINAL RICHELIEU	Mr. Macready
THE CHEVALIER DE MAUPRAT	Mr. Anderson
THE SIEUR DE BERINGHEN	<i>in attendance on the King,</i> ¹ <i>one of the Conspirators</i> . . Mr. Vining
JOSEPH	<i>a Capuchin, Richelieu's confidant</i> Mr. Phelps
HUGUET	<i>an officer of Richelieu's household guard — a spy</i> . . Mr. George Bennet
FRANÇOIS	<i>first Page to Richelieu</i> . . Mr. Henry Howe
FIRST COURTIER	Mr. Roberts
CAPTAIN OF THE ARCHERS	Mr. Matthews
CLERMONT	Mr. Tilbury
SECRETARIES OF STATE	{ Mr. Yarnold Mr. Payne
GOVERNOR OF THE BASTILE	Mr. Waldron
GAOLER	Mr. Ayliffe

Courtiers, Pages, Conspirators, Officers, Soldiers, etc.

JULIE DE MORTEMAR	<i>an Orphan, Ward to Richelieu</i> Miss Helen Faucit
MARION DE LORME	<i>Mistress to Orleans, but in Richelieu's pay</i> . . . Miss Charles

¹ Properly speaking, the King's First Valet de Chambre, a post of great importance that time.

RICHELIEU

ACT I

FIRST DAY

THE FIRST. — *A room in the house of MARION DE LORME; — a table towards the front of the stage (with wine, fruits, etc.), at which are seated BARADAS, four COURTIERs, splendidly dressed in the costume of 1641-42; — the DUKE OF ORLEANS reclining on a large fauteuil; — MARION DE LORME, standing at the back of his chair, offers him a goblet, and then retires. At another table, DE BERINGHEN, DE MAUPRAT, playing at dice; other COURTIERs, of inferior rank to those at the table of the DUKE, looking on.*

ORLEANS [*drinking*]. Here's to our enterprise! —

BARADAS [*glancing at MARION*]. Hush, Sir! —

ORLEANS [*aside*]. Nay, Count, may I trust her; she doats on me; no house so safe as Marion's. "At our statelier homes

the very walls do play the eaves-dropper.

There's not a sunbeam creeping o'er our floors

but seems a glance from that malignant eye

which reigns o'er France; our fatal greatness lives

in the sharp glare of one relentless day. Richelieu's self forgets to fear the sword

whose mirtle hides; and Marion's silken robe

shows its kind charity o'er fiercer sins than those which haunt the rosy path between

the lip and eye of beauty. Oh, no house so safe as Marion's."

BARADAS. Still, we have a secret, oil and water — woman and a secret —

of hostile properties.

ORLEANS. Well — Marion, see How the play prospers yonder.

[*MARION goes to the next table, looks on for a few moments, then Exit*]

BARADAS [*producing a parchment*]. I have now

All the conditions drawn; it only needs Our signatures upon receipt of this,

(Where to is joined the schedule of our treaty

With the Count-Duke, the Richelieu of the Escorial,)

Bouillon will join his army with the Spaniard,

March on to Paris, — there, dethrone the King:

You will be Regent; I, and ye, my Lords,

Form the new Council. So much for the core

Of our great scheme.

ORLEANS. But Richelieu is an Argus: One of his hundred eyes will light upon us,

And then — good-bye to life.

BARADAS. To gain the prize We must destroy the Argus: — ay, my Lords,

The scroll the core, but blood must fill the veins

Of our design; — while this despatched to Bouillon,

Richelieu despatched to Heaven! — The last my charge.

Meet here to-morrow night. *You, Sir,* as first

In honour and in hope, meanwhile select Some trusty knave to bear the scroll to Bouillon;

Midst Richelieu's foes I'll find some desperate hand

To strike for vengeance, while we stride to power.

ORLEANS. So be it; — to-morrow, midnight. —

Come, my Lords.

[*Exeunt ORLEANS, and the COURTIERs in his train. Those at the other table rise, salute ORLEANS, and re-seat themselves*]

DE BERINGHEN. Double the stakes.

DE MAUPRAT. Done.

DE BERINGHEN. Bravo; faith it shames me

To bleed a purse already *in extremis*.

DE MAUPRAT. Nay, as you've had the patient to yourself

So long, no other doctor should despatch it.

[*DE MAUPRAT throws and loses*]

OMNES. Lost! Ha, ha, — poor De Mauprat!

DE BERINGHEN. One throw more?

DE MAUPRAT. No, I am bankrupt [*pushing gold*] There goes all — except

My honour and my sword. [*They rise*]

DE BERINGHEN. Long cloaks and honour

Went out of vogue together, when we found

We got on much more rapidly without them;

The sword, indeed, is never out of fashion, —

The Devil has care of *that*.

FIRST GAMESTER. Ay, take the sword

To Cardinal Richelieu — he gives gold for steel,

When worn by brave men.

DE MAUPRAT. Richelieu!

DE BERINGHEN. [*To BARADAS*] At that name

He changes colour, bites his nether lip.

Ev'n in his brightest moments whisper "*Richelieu*,"

And you cloud all his sunshine.

BARADAS. I have mark'd it,

And I will learn the wherefore.

DE MAUPRAT. The Egyptian

Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught: Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,

And drain it thus. [*Drinking*]

DE BERINGHEN. Come, gentlemen, what say ye,

A walk on the Parade?

OMNES. Ay, come, De Mauprat.

DE MAUPRAT. Pardon me; we shall meet again, ere nightfall.

BARADAS. I'll stay and comfort Mauprat.

DE BERINGHEN. Comfort! — when We gallant fellows have run out a friend

There's nothing left — except to r him through!

There's the last act of friendship.

DE MAUPRAT. Let me keep That favour in reserve; in all beside Your most obedient servant.

[*Exeunt DE BERINGHEN, et*

Manent DE MAUPRAT a

BARADAS]

BARADAS. You have lost —

Yet are not sad.

DE MAUPRAT. Sad! — Life and go have wings

And must fly one day: — open, the their cages

And wish them merry.

BARADAS. You're a strange enigma: —

Fiery in war — and yet to glory lukewarm;

All mirth in action — in repose a gloom —

These are extremes in which the unconscious heart

Betrays the fever of deep-fix'd disease

Confide in me! our young days roll together

In the same river, glassing the same stars

That smile i' the heaven of hope; alike we made

Bright-winged steeds of our uniform chimeras,

Spurring the fancies upward to the a

Wherein we shaped fair castles from the cloud,

Fortune of late has sever'd us, and led Me to the rank of Courtier, Count, and

Favourite — You to the titles of the wildest gallant

And bravest knight in France; — a you content?

No; — trust in me — some gloom secret —

DE MAUPRAT. Ay: — A secret that doth haunt me, as, of old

Men were possess'd of fiends? Where? I turn,

The grave yawns dark before me! will trust you; —

Hating the Cardinal, and beguiled Orleans,

You know I join'd the Languedoc revolt —

Was captured — sent to the Bastille — BARADAS. But shared

The general pardon, which the Duke Orleans

Won for himself and all in the revolt, Who but obey'd his orders.

DE MAUPRAT. Note the phrase; —
bey'd his orders." Well, when on my
 way

join the Duke in Languedoc, I (then
 e down upon my lip — less man than
 boy)

ading young valours — reckless as
 myself,

zed on the town of Faviaux, and
 displaced

e Royal banners for the Rebel.
 Orleans,

ever too daring) when I reach'd the
 camp,

amed me for acting — mark — *with-*
out his orders:

on this quibble Richelieu razed my
 name

t of the general pardon.

BARADAS. Yet released you
 om the Bastile —

DE MAUPRAT. To call me to his
 presence,

d thus address me; — "You have
 seized a town

France, without the orders of your
 leader,

d for this treason, but one sentence
 — DEATH."

BARADAS. Death!

DE MAUPRAT. "I have pity on your
 youth and birth,

r wish to glut the headsman; —
 join your troop,

w on the march against the Span-
 iards; — change

e traitor's scaffold for the Soldier's
 grave; —

ur memory stainless — they who
 shared your crime

il'd or dead, — your king shall never
 learn it."

BARADAS. O tender pity! — O most
 charming prospect!

own into atoms by a bomb, or drill'd
 o a cullender by gunshot! — Well? —

DE MAUPRAT. You have heard if I
 fought bravely. — Death became

sired as Daphne by the eager Day-
 god.

ge him I chas'd the nymph — to
 grasp the laurel!

ould not die!

BARADAS. Poor Fellow!

DE MAUPRAT. When the Cardinal
 view'd the troops — his eye met

mine; — he frown'd,
 mmon'd me forth — "How's this?"

quoth he; "you have shunn'd
 e sword — beware the axe! — 'twill

fall one day!"

He left me thus — we were recalled to
 Paris,

And — you know all!

BARADAS. And, knowing this, why
 halt you,

Spell'd by the rattlesnake, — while in
 the breasts

Of your firm friends beat hearts, tha
 vow the death

Of your grim tyrant? — wake! — Be
 one of us;

The time invites — the King detests the
 Cardinal,

Dares not disgrace, — but groans to be
 deliver'd

Of that too great a subject — join your
 friends,

Free France and save yourself.

DE MAUPRAT. Hush! Richelieu
 bears

A charmed life: — to all who have
 braved his power,

One common end — the block.

BARADAS. Nay, if he live,

The block your doom!

DE MAUPRAT. Better the victim,
 Count,

Than the assassin — France requires a
 Richelieu,

But does not need a Mauprat. Truce to
 this; —

All time one midnight, where my
 thoughts are spectres.

What to me fame? — What love? —

BARADAS. Yet dost thou love *not*?

DE MAUPRAT. Love? — I am
 young —

BARADAS. And Julie fair! [*Aside*] It
 is so,

Upon the margin of the grave — his
 hand

Would pluck the rose that I would
 win and wear!

"[*Aloud*] Thou lovest —

"DE MAUPRAT. Who, lonely in the
 midnight tent,

"Gazed on the watch-fires in the sleep-
 less air,

"Nor chose one star amidst the cluster-
 ing hosts

"To bless it in the name of some fair
 face

"Set in his spirit, as the star in Heaven?
 "For our divine Affections, like the

Spheres,

"Move ever, ever musical.

"BARADAS. You speak

"As one who fed on poetry.

"DE MAUPRAT. Why, man,

"The thoughts of lovers stir with
 poetry

"As leaves with summer wind. — The heart that loves
 "Dwells in an Eden, hearing angellutes,
 "As Eve in the First Garden. Hadst thou seen
 "My Julie, and not felt it henceforth dull
 "To live in the common world — and talk in words
 "That clothe the feelings of the frigid herd? —
 "Upon the perfumed pillow of her lips —
 "As on his native bed of roses flush'd
 "With Paphian skies — Love smiling sleeps: — Her voice
 "The blest interpreter of thoughts as pure
 "As virgin wells where Dian takes delight,
 "Or Fairies dip their changelings! — In the maze
 "Of her harmonious beauties — Modestly
 "(Like some severer Grace that leads the choir
 "Of her sweet sisters) every airy motion
 "Attunes to such chaste charm, that Passion holds
 "His burning breath, and will not with a sigh
 "Dissolve the spell that binds him! — Oh those eyes
 "That woo the earth — shadowing more soul than lurks
 "Under the lids of Psyche! — Go! — thy lip
 "Curls at the purfled phrases of a lover —
 "Love thou, and if thy love be deep as mine,
 "Thou wilt not laugh at poets.
 "BARADAS [*aside*]. With each word
 "Thou wak'st a jealous demon in my heart,
 "And my hand clutches at my hilt —"
 DE MAUPRAT [*gaily*]. No more! — I love! — Your breast holds both my secrets; — Never
 Unbury either! — Come, while yet we may,
 We'll bask us in the noon of rosy life: —
 Lounge through the gardens, — flaunt it in the taverns,
 Laugh, — game, — drink, — feast; — If so confine my days,
 Faith, I'll enclose the nights. — Pshaw! not so grave;
 I'm a true Frenchman! — *Vive la bagatelle!*
 [As they are going out enter HUGUET and four ARQUEBUSIERS]

HUGUET. Messire De Mauprat I arrest you! — Follow To the Lord Cardinal.
 DE MAUPRAT. You see, my friend I'm out of my suspense — The t play'd
 Long enough with his prey. — well! — Hereafter
 Say, when men name me, "Adieu Mauprat
 Lived without hope, and perished out fear!"
 [*Exeunt DE MAUPRAT, HUGUET etc.*]
 BARADAS. Farewell! — I trust ever! I design'd thee
 For Richelieu's murderer — but, a his martyr!
 In childhood you the stronger — I cursed you;
 In youth the fairer — and I curse still;
 And now my rival! While the of Julie
 Hung on thy lips — I smiled — then I saw
 In my mind's eye, the cold and grim Death
 Hang o'er thy head the pall! — ambition, Love,
 Ye twin-born stars of daring destiny Sit in my house of Life! — By the King's aid
 I will be Julie's husband — in despite Of my Lord Cardinal — By the King's aid
 I will be minister of France — spite Of my Lord Cardinal; — and then what then?
 The King loves Julie — feeble prince false master —
 [*Producing and gazing on parchment*]
 Then, by the aid of Bouillon and Spaniard,
 I will dethrone the King; and all — ha! —
 All, in despite of my Lord Cardinal

SCENE SECOND. — A room in the King's Chamber, the walls hung with tapestries.
 A large screen in one corner. A table covered with books, papers, &c.
 A rude clock in a recess. On the wall statues, bookcases, weapons of different periods, and banners depended over RICHELIEU's chair.
 [RICHELIEU and JOSEPH]

CHELIEU. And so you think this new conspiracy craftiest trap yet laid for the old ox? —

— Well, I like the nickname! What did Plutarch of the Greek Lysander?

SEPH. I forget.

CHELIEU. That where the lion's kin fell short, he eked it with the fox's. A great statesman, Joseph, same Lysander?

SEPH. Orleans heads the traitors.

CHELIEU. A very wooden head then! Well?

SEPH. The favourite, Count Baradas —

CHELIEU. A weed of hasty growth, gentleman of the chamber, — titles, lands, the King's ear! — it cost me six long winters' count as high, as in six little moons painted lizard — But I hold the ladder, when I shake — he falls! What more?

SEPH. A scheme make your orphan-ward an instrument of your foes. You placed her with the Queen, of the royal chamber, — as a watch enemy's quarters —

CHELIEU. And the silly child calls me daily, — calls me "Father," — prays heaven to bless me — And for all the rest, I have placed a doll about the Queen!

Does not heed who frowns — who smiles; with whom

King confers in whispers; notes not when

who last week were foes, are found in corners

seriously affectionate; words spoken in closed doors she never hears; — by chance

ing the air at keyholes — Senseless puppet!

ears — nor eyes! — and yet she says — "She loves me!"

SEPH. Your ward has charm'd the King.

CHELIEU. Out on you!

I not, one by one, from such fair hoots

Pluck'd the insidious ivy of his love? And shall it creep around my blossom-ing tree

Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music

That spirits in Heaven might hear? They're sinful too,

Those passionate surfeits of the rampant flesh,

The Church condemns them; and to us, my Joseph,

The props and pillars of the Church, most hurtful.

The King is weak — whoever the King loves

Must rule the King; the lady loves another,

The other rules the lady — thus we're balked

Of our own proper sway — The King must have

No Goddess but the State: — the State — That's Richelieu!

JOSEPH. This not the worst; — Louis, in all decorous,

And deeming you her least compliant guardian,

Would veil his suit by marriage with his minion,

Your prosperous foe, Count Baradas.

RICHELIEU. Ha! ha!

I have another bride for Baradas!

JOSEPH. You, my lord?

RICHELIEU. Ay — more faithful than the love

Of fickle woman: — when the head lies lowliest,

Clasping him fondest; — Sorrow never knew

So sure a soother, — and her bed is stainless!

JOSEPH [*aside*]. If of the grave he speaks I do not wonder

That priests are bachelors!

[*Enter FRANÇOIS*]

FRANÇOIS. Mademoiselle De Mortemar.

RICHELIEU. Most opportune — admit her. [*Exit FRANÇOIS*]

In my closet

You'll find a rosary, Joseph; ere you tell

Three hundred beads, I'll summon you. — Stay, Joseph;

I did omit an Ave in my matins, —

A grievous fault; — atone it for me, Joseph;

There is a scourge within; I am weak, you strong,

It were but charity to take my sin

On such broad shoulders. Exercise is healthful.

JOSEPH. I! guilty of such criminal presumption
As to mistake myself for you. — No, never!

Think it not. — [*Aside*] Troth, a pleasant invitation! [*Exit JOSEPH*]

[*Enter JULIE DE MORTEMAR*]

RICHELIEU. That's my sweet Julie! why, upon this face
Blushes such daybreak, one might swear the Morning
Were come to visit Tithon.

JULIE [*placing herself at his feet*]. Are you gracious?

May I say "Father?"

RICHELIEU. Now and ever!

JULIE. Father!

A sweet word to an orphan.

RICHELIEU. No; not orphan
While Richelieu lives; thy father loved me well;

My friend, ere I had flatterers (now, I'm great,

In other phrase, I'm friendless) — he died young

In years, not service, and bequeathed thee to me;

And thou shalt have a dowry, girl, to buy

Thy mate amidst the mightiest. Drooping? — sighs? —

Art thou not happy at the Court?

JULIE. Not often.

RICHELIEU [*aside*]. Can she love Baradas? — Ah! at thy heart

There's what can smile and sigh, blush and grow pale,

All in a breath! — Thou art admired — art young;

Does not his Majesty commend thy beauty —

Ask thee to sing to him? and swear such sounds

Had smooth'd the brows of Saul? —

JULIE. He's very tiresome,

Our worthy King.

RICHELIEU. Fie; kings are never tiresome,

Save to their ministers. — What courtly gallants

Charm ladies most? De Sourdiac, Longueville, or

The favourite Baradas?

JULIE. A smileless man —

I fear, and shun him.

RICHELIEU. Yet he courts thee?

JULIE. Then
He is more tiresome than his Majesty.

RICHELIEU. Right, girl, shun Baradas. — Yet of these flowers
Of France, not one, in whose honied breath
Thy heart hears Summer whisper?

[*Enter HUGUET*]

HUGUET. The Chevalier De Mauprat waits below.

JULIE [*starting up*]. De Mauprat?

RICHELIEU. He has been tiresome, too. — Anon [*Exit HUGUET*]

JULIE. What doth he? —

I mean — I — Does your Eminence that is —

Know you Messire de Mauprat?

RICHELIEU. Well! — and you — Has he address'd you often?

JULIE. Often! No, — Nine times; — nay, ten! — the time, by the lattice

Of the great staircase. [*In a melancholy tone*] The Court sees rarely.

RICHELIEU. A bold and forward royster?

JULIE. He? — nay, modest, Gentle, and sad methinks.

RICHELIEU. Wears gold and azure?

JULIE. No; sable.

RICHELIEU. So you note his colour? Julie?

Shame on you, child, look loftier. the mass

I have business with this modest gentleman.

JULIE. You're angry with poor J. There's no cause.

RICHELIEU. No cause — you my foes?

JULIE. I do!

RICHELIEU. Hate Mauprat!

JULIE. Not Mauprat. No, Adrien, father?

RICHELIEU. Adrien!

Familiar! — Go, child; no, — not way; — wait

In the tapestry chamber; I will you — go.

JULIE. His brows are knit; dare not call him father!

But I must speak — Your Eminence

RICHELIEU [*sternly*]. Well! girl!

JULIE. Nay

Smile on me — one smile more; then now I'm happy.

Do not rank De Mauprat with your foes; he is not,

I know he is not, he loves France well.

RICHELIEU. Not rank De Mauprat with my foes? So be it.

Plot him from that list.

JULIE. That's my own father.

[Exit JULIE]

RICHELIEU [*ringing a small bell on the table*]. Huguet!

[Enter HUGUET]

Mauprat struggled not, nor murmur'd?

HUGUET. No; proud and passive.

RICHELIEU. Bid him enter. — Hold: look that he hide no weapon. Humph, despair

Victims sometimes victors. When he has enter'd,

He round unseen; — place thyself yonder [*pointing to the screen*]; watch him;

He show violence — (let me see thy carbine;

A good weapon) — if he play the lion,

Why — the dog's death.

HUGUET. I never miss my mark.

[Exit HUGUET; RICHELIEU seats himself at the table, and slowly arranges the papers before him. Enter DE MAUPRAT, preceded by HUGUET, who then retires behind the screen]

RICHELIEU. Approach, Sir. — Can you call to mind the hour, three years since, when in this room, methinks,

My presence honour'd me?

DE MAUPRAT. It is, my Lord,

Of my most —

RICHELIEU [*drily*]. Delightful recollections.

DE MAUPRAT [*aside*]. St. Denis! doth he make a jest of axe and headsman?

RICHELIEU [*sternly*]. I did then accord you

For mercy ill requited — you still live?

DE MAUPRAT. To meet death face to face at last.

RICHELIEU. Your words are bold.

DE MAUPRAT. My deeds have not belied them.

RICHELIEU. Deeds!

A miserable delusion of man's pride!

Fields! cities sack'd, fields ravaged, hearths profaned,

Even butcher'd! In your hour of doom behold

"The deeds you boast of! From rank showers of blood,

"And the red light of blazing roofs, you build

"The Rainbow Glory, and to shuddering Conscience

"Cry, — Lo, the Bridge to Heaven?

"DE MAUPRAT. If war be sinful,

"Your hand the gauntlet cast.

"RICHELIEU. It was so, Sir.

"Note the distinction: — I weigh'd well the cause

"Which made the standard holy; raised the war

"But to secure the peace. France bled — I groan'd;

"But look'd beyond; and, in the vista, saw

"France saved, and I exulted. You — but you

"Were but the tool of slaughter — knowing nought,

"Foreseeing nought, nought hoping, nought lamenting,

"And for nought fit, — save cutting throats for hire.

"Deeds, marry, deeds!

"DE MAUPRAT. If you would deign to speak

"Thus to your armies ere they march to battle,

"Perchance your Eminence might have the pain

"Of the throat-cutting to yourself.

"RICHELIEU [*aside*]. He has wit,

"This Mauprat — [*Aloud*] Let it pass; there is against you

"What you can less excuse." Messire de Mauprat

Doom'd to sure death, how hast thou since consumed

The time allotted thee for serious thought

And solemn penitence?

DE MAUPRAT [*embarrassed*]. The time, my Lord?

RICHELIEU. Is not the question plain? I'll answer for thee:

Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine; no sackcloth chafed

Thy delicate flesh. The rosary and the death's-head

Have not, with pious meditation, purged Earth from the carnal gaze. What thou hast not done

Brief told; what done, a volume! Wild debauch,

Turbulent riot: — for the morn the dice-box —

Noon claim'd the duel — and the night the wassail:

These, your most holy, pure preparatives
For death and judgment. Do I wrong
you, Sir?

DE MAUPRAT. I was not always
thus:—if chang'd my nature
Blame that which changed my fate.—
Alas, my Lord,

"There is a brotherhood which calm-
eyed Reason,

"Can wot not of betwixt Despair and
Mirth.

"My birth-place mid the vines of sunny
Provence,

'Perchance the stream that sparkles
in my veins,

"Came from that wine of passionate
life which, erst,

"Glow'd in the wild heart of the Trou-
badour:

"And danger, which makes steadier
courage wary,

"But fevers me with an insane delight;
"As one of old who on the mountain-
crags

"Caught madness from a Mænad's
haunting eyes.

"Were you, my Lord,—whose path
imperial power,

"And the grave cares of reverent
wisdom guard

"From all that tempts to folly meaner
men,—"

Were you accursed with that which
you inflicted

By bed and board, dogg'd by one
ghastly spectre—

The while within you youth beat high,
and life

Grew lovelier from the neighbouring
frown of death—

The heart no bud, nor fruit—save in
those seeds

Most worthless, which spring up, bloom,
bear, and wither

In the same hour—Were this your
fate, perchance

You wou'd have err'd like me!

RICHIEU. I might, like you,
Have been a brawler and a reveller;—
not,

Like you trickster and a thief.—

DE MAUPRAT [*advancing threaten-
ingly*]. Lord Cardinal!—

Unsay those words!

[HUGUET deliberately raises his
carbine]

RICHIEU [*waving his hand*]. Not
quite so quick, friend Huguet;

Messire de Mauprat is a patient man,
And he can wait!—

You have outrun your fortune;—

I blame you not, that you would be
beggar—

Each to his taste!—But I do charge
you, Sir,

That, being beggar'd, you would not
false monies

Out of that crucible, called DEBT
To live

On means not yours—be brave
silks and laces,

Gallant in steeds—splendid in
quets;—all

Not *yours*—ungiven—unherited
unpaid for;—

This is to be a trickster; and to file
Men's art and labour, which to them
wealth,

Life, daily bread—quitting all so
with—"Friend,

You're troublesome!"—Why this,
give me,

Is what—when done with a less dan-
ger—

Plain folks call "*Theft!*" You
eight thousand pistoles,

Minus one crown, two liards!—

DE MAUPRAT [*aside*]. The old
juror!—

'Sdeath, he'll inform me next how m-
uch

I drank at dinner!—

RICHIEU. This is scandalous,
Shaming your birth and blood.

tell you, Sir,
That you must pay your debts.—

DE MAUPRAT. With all my hear-
My Lord.—Where shall I borrow

then, the money?

RICHIEU [*aside and laughing*].
humorous dare-devil!—The v-

man
To suit my purpose—ready, fra-
and bold! [*Rising and earnest*]

Adrien de Mauprat, men have call-
me cruel;—

I am not;—I am *just!*—I for-
France rent asunder,—

The rich men despots, and the p-
banditti;—

Sloth in the mart, and schism wit-
the temple;

Brawls festering to Rebellion;—
weak Laws

Rotting away with rust in anti-
sheaths.—

I have re-created France; and, from
ashes

Of the old feudal and decrepit carca-
Civilization on her luminous wings

Soars, phoenix-like, to Jove! W-
was my art?

us, some say — some, Fortune, — Witchcraft, some.

so; — my art was JUSTICE! Force and Fraud

name it cruelty — you shall confute them!

champion You! You met me as your foe,

art my friend. — You shall not die. — France needs you.

shall wipe off all stains — be rich, be honour'd,

reat —
[DE MAUPRAT falls on his knee, RICHELIEU raises him]

I ask, Sir, in return, this hand, gift it with a bride, whose dower shall match,

not exceed, her beauty.

MAUPRAT. I, my Lord,

[hesitating]
ve no wish to marry.

RICHELIEU. Surely, Sir, lie were worse.

MAUPRAT. Scarcely; the poorest coward

t die, — but knowingly to march to marriage —

Lord, it asks the courage of a lion!

RICHELIEU. Traitor, thou triflest with me! — I know *all*!

thast dared to love my ward — my charge.

MAUPRAT. As rivers love the sunlight — basking in the beams,

hurrying on! —

RICHELIEU. Thou hast told her of thy love?

MAUPRAT. My Lord, if I had dared to love a maid,

liest in France, I would not so have wrong'd her

bid her link rich life and virgin hope

a one, the deathman's gripe might, from her side

k at the nuptial altar.

RICHELIEU. I believe thee; since she knows not of thy love,

renounce her; life and fortune with another! — Silent?

MAUPRAT. Your fate has been one triumph. — You know not

bless'd a thing it was in my dark hour

nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish.

hath no need of words; — nor less within

That holiest temple — the heaven-built soul —

Breathes the recorded vow — Base knight, — false lover

Were he, who barter'd all, that brighten'd grief

Or sanctified despair, for life and gold.

Revoke your mercy; — I prefer the fate

I look'd for!
RICHELIEU. Huguet! To the tapestry chamber

Conduct your prisoner.
[To MAUPRAT] You will there behold

The executioner: — your doom be private —

And Heaven have mercy on you!

DE MAUPRAT. When I'm dead, Tell her, I loved her.

RICHELIEU. Keep such follies, Sir, For fitter ears; — go —

DE MAUPRAT. Does he mock me?
[Exeunt DE MAUPRAT and HUGUET]

RICHELIEU. Joseph, Come forth.

[Enter JOSEPH]
Methinks your cheek hath lost its rubies;

I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh;

The scourge is heavy.

JOSEPH. Pray you, change the subject.

RICHELIEU. You good men are so modest! — Well, to business!

Go instantly — deeds — notaries! bid my stewards

Arrange my house by the Luxembourg — *my* house

No more! — a bridal present to my ward,

Who weds to-morrow.

JOSEPH. Weds, with whom?

RICHELIEU. De Mauprat.

JOSEPH. Penniless husband!

RICHELIEU. Bah! the mate for beauty

Should be a man, and not a money-chest!

When her brave sire lay on his bed of death,

I vow'd to be a father to his Julie; — And so he died — the smile upon his lips! —

And when I spared the life of her young lover,

Methought I saw that smile again! Who else,
Look you, in all the Court — who else so well,

Brave, or supplant the favourite; —
 balk the King —
 Baffle their schemes? — I have tried
 him: — He has honour
 And courage; — qualities that eagle
 plume
 Men's souls — and fit them for the
 fiercest sun,
 Which ever melted the weak waxen
 minds
 That flutter in the beams of gaudy
 Power!
 Besides, he has taste, this Mauprat: —
 When my play
 Was acted to dull tiers of lifeless gapers,
 Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him
 Applaud in the proper places; trust
 me, Joseph,
 He is a man of an uncommon promise!
 JOSEPH. And yet your foe.
 RICHELIEU. Have I not foes enow? —
 Great men gain doubly when they make
 foes friends.
 Remember my grand maxims: — First
 employ
 All methods to conciliate.
 JOSEPH. Failing these?
 RICHELIEU [*fiercely*]. All means to
 crush; as with the opening, and
 The clenching of this little hand, I will
 Crush the small venom of these sting-
 ing courtiers,
 So, so we've baffled Baradas.
 JOSEPH. And when
 Check the conspiracy?
 RICHELIEU. Check, check? Full
 way to it.
 Let it bud, ripen, flaunt i' the day, and
 burst
 To fruit, — the Dead Sea's fruit of
 ashes; ashes
 Which I will scatter to the winds.
 Go, Joseph;
 When you return, I have a feast for you:
 The last great act of my great play;
 the verses
 Methinks are fine, — ah, very fine. —
 You write
 Verses! — [*aside*] *such* verses! — You
 have wit, discernment.
 JOSEPH. [*aside*]. Worse than the
 scourge! Strange that so great a
 statesman
 Should be so bad a poet.
 RICHELIEU. What dost say?
 JOSEPH. That it is strange so great
 a statesman should
 Be so sublime a poet.
 RICHELIEU. Ah, you rogue;
 Laws die, Books never. Of my min-
 istry

I am not vain; but of my muse,
 own it.
 Come, you shall hear the verses now
 [*Takes up a M*]
 JOSEPH. My Lord,
 The deeds, the notaries!
 RICHELIEU. True, I pity you;
 But business first, then pleasure.
 [*Exit JOS*]
 [*Sits himself, and readi*]
 Ah sublime!
 [*Enter DE MAUPRAT and JULIE*]
 DE MAUPRAT. Oh, speak, my L
 — I dare not think you mock m
 And yet —
 RICHELIEU. Hush, hush — this l
 must be considered!
 JULIE. Are we not both your ch
 dren?
 RICHELIEU. What a couplet!
 How now! Oh, sir — you live! —
 DE MAUPRAT. Why, no, methin
 Elysium is not life!
 JULIE. He smiles! — you smile,
 My father! From my heart for ev
 now,
 I'll blot the name of orphan!
 RICHELIEU. Rise, my children,
 For ye are mine — mine both; — a
 in your sweet
 And young delight — your love — (lif
 first-born glory)
 My own lost youth breathes musical
 DE MAUPRAT. I'll seek
 Temple and priest henceforward;
 were it but
 To learn Heaven's choicest blessings.
 RICHELIEU. Thou shalt seek
 Temple and priest right soon; t
 morrow's sun
 Shall see across these barren thresho
 pass
 The fairest bride in Paris. Go, r
 children:
 Even I loved once. — Be lovers wh
 ye may.
 How is it with you, Sir? You bear
 bravely;
 You know, it asks the courage of
 lion.
 [*Exeunt DE MAUPRAT a*
 JULIE]
 Oh, godlike Power! Woe, Raptu
 Penury, Wealth, —
 Marriage and Death, for one infi
 old man
 Through a great empire to dispense
 withhold —
 As the will whispers! And shall thin
 — like motes

live in my daylight — lackies of
court wages,
r'd starvelings — manikins, upon
whose shoulders
burthen of a province were a load
heavy than the globe on Atlas —
cast
for my robes and sceptre? France,
I love thee!
Earth shall never pluck thee from
my heart!
mistress France — my wedded
wife — sweet France,
shall proclaim divorce for thee
and me! [Exit RICHELIEU]

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SECOND DAY

NE FIRST. — *A splendid Apartment
in MAUPRAT'S new House. Case-
ments opening to the Gardens, be-
yond which the domes of the Luxem-
bourg Palace.*

[Enter BARADAS]

BARADAS. Mauprat's new home: —
oo splendid for a soldier!
o'er his floors — the while I stalk
— methinks
shadow spreads gigantic to the
gloom
old rude towers of the Bastile cast
far
g the smoothness of the jocund day.
, thou hast 'scaped the fierce caprice
of Richelieu;
art thou farther from the heads-
man, fool?
secret I have whisper'd to the
King; —
marriage makes the King thy foe.
Thou stand'st
he abyss — and in the pool below
ee a ghastly, headless phantom
mirror'd:
likeness ere the marriage moon
hath waned.
nwhile — meanwhile — ha, ha — if
thou art wedded
u art not wived.

nter MAUPRAT, splendidly dressed]

E MAUPRAT. Was ever fate like
mine?

lest, and yet so wretched!

BARADAS. Joy, de Mauprat!

Why, what a brow, man, for your
wedding-day!

DE MAUPRAT. Jest not. — Dis-
traction!

BARADAS. What, your wife a shrew
Already? Courage, man — the com-
mon lot!

DE MAUPRAT. Oh, that she were less
lovely, or less loved!

BARADAS. Riddles again!

DE MAUPRAT. You know what
chanced between
The Cardinal and myself.

BARADAS. This morning brought
Your letter — a strange account! I
laugh'd

And wept at once for gladness.

DE MAUPRAT. We were wed
At noon — the rite performed, came
hither — scarce

Arrived, when —

BARADAS. Well? —

DE MAUPRAT. Wide flew the doors,
and lo,
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle!

BARADAS. 'Tis the King's hand! —
the royal seal!

DE MAUPRAT. Read — read!

BARADAS [reading]. "Whereas,
Adrien de Mauprat, Colonel and Cheva-
lier in our armies, being already guilty
of high treason, by the seizure of our
town of Faviaux, has presumed, without
our knowledge, consent, or sanction, to
connect himself by marriage with Julie
de Mortemar, a wealthy orphan at-
tached to the person of Her Majesty,
without our knowledge or consent —
We do hereby proclaim and declare the
said marriage contrary to law. On
penalty of death, Adrien de Mauprat
will not communicate with the said
Julie de Mortemar by word or letter,
save in the presence of our faithful
servant, the Sieur de Beringhen, and
then with such respect and decorum as
are due to a Demoiselle attached to the
Court of France, until such time as it
may suit our royal pleasure to confer
with the Holy Church on the formal
annulment of the marriage, and with
our Council on the punishment to be
awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who
is cautioned for his own sake to preserve
silence as to our injunction, more es-
pecially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar.
Given under our hand and seal at the
Louvre. LOUIS." [Returning the letter].
Amazement! — Did not Richelieu say,
the King

Knew not your crime?

DE MAUPRAT. He said so.
 BARADAS. Poor de Mauprat!
 See you the snare, the vengeance worse
 than death,
 Of which you are the victim?

DE MAUPRAT. Ha!

BARADAS *[aside]*. It works!

*[JULIE and DE BERINGHEN in the
 Gardens]*

You have not sought the Cardinal yet,
 to —

DE MAUPRAT. No!

Scarce yet my sense awaken'd from the
 shock;

Now I will seek him.

BARADAS. Hold — beware! Stir not
 Till we confer again.

DE MAUPRAT. Speak out, man!

BARADAS. Hush!

Your wife! — De Beringhen! — Be on
 your guard.

Obeys the royal orders to the letter.

I'll look around your palace. By my
 troth,

A princely mansion!

DE MAUPRAT. Stay —

BARADAS. So new a bridegroom

Can want no visitors. — Your Servant,
 Madam.

Oh, happy pair — oh, charming picture!
[Exit through a side door]

JULIE. Adrien,

You left us suddenly — are you not
 well?

DE MAUPRAT. Oh, very well —
 that is — extremely ill.

JULIE. Ill, Adrien?

[Taking his hand]

DE MAUPRAT. Not when I see
 thee.

*[He is about to lift her hand to
 his lips, when DE BERINGHEN
 coughs, and pulls his mantle.
 DE MAUPRAT drops the hand,
 and walks away]*

JULIE. Alas!

Should he not love me?

DE BERINGHEN *[aside]*. Have a care,
 I must

Report each word, each gesture to his
 Majesty.

DE MAUPRAT. Sir, if you were not
 in his Majesty's service,

You'd be the most officious, impudent,
 Damn'd busy-body ever interfering
 In a man's family affairs.

DE BERINGHEN. But as

I do belong, Sir, to his Majesty —

DE MAUPRAT. You're lucky! —
 Still, were we a story higher,

'Twere prudent not to go too near
 window.

JULIE. Adrien, what have I done
 Say, am I changed

Since yesterday? — or was it but
 wealth,

Ambition, life — that — that —
 swore you loved me?

DE MAUPRAT. I shall go mad
 do, indeed I do —

DE BERINGHEN *[aside]*. Not I
 her! that were highly disrespectful

JULIE. You do — what, Adrien?

DE MAUPRAT. Oh! I do, indeed
 I do think, that this weather is deli-
 cious!

A charming day! the sky is so serene
 And what a prospect! — *[To DE BERINGHEN]*

Oh! you Popinjay!

JULIE. He jests at me! — he mocks
 me! — yet I love him,

And every look becomes the lips
 love!

Perhaps I am too grave? — You laugh
 at Julie;

If laughter please you, welcome be
 music!

Only say, Adrien, that you love me

DE MAUPRAT *[kissing her hand]*.

With my whole heart I love you!
 Now, Sir,

And tell that to his Majesty! Woe
 ever

Heard of its being a state-offence to
 The hand of one's own wife?

JULIE. He says he loves me,
 And starts away, as if to say "I love
 you"

Meant something very dreadful
 Come, sit by me, —

I place your chair! — fie on your
 gallantry!

*[They sit down; as he pushes
 chair back, she draws
 nearer]*

Why must this strange Messire
 de Beringhen

Be always here? He never takes
 hint.

Do you not wish him gone?

DE MAUPRAT. Upon my soul
 I do, my Julie! — Send him for your
 bouquet,

Your glove, your — anything —

JULIE. Messire de Beringhen,
 I dropp'd my glove in the gardens
 the fountain,

Or the alcove, or — stay — no, by
 statue

Of Cupid; may I ask you to —

DE BERINGHEN. To send for it?

ainly. [*Ring a bell on the table*]
André, Pierre, (you rascals, how
e call them?)

[*Enter SERVANTS*]

— Madame has dropp'd her glove
e gardens, by the fountain, or the
alcove;

— stay — no, by the statue — eh?
— of Cupid.

g it.

MAUPRAT. Did ever now one
pair of shoulders

y such waggon-loads of impudence
a gentleman's drawing-room?

Dear Julie,
busy — letters — visitors — the
devil!

beseech you leave me — I say —
leave me.

LIE [*weeping*]. You are unkind.
[*Exit*]

[*As she goes out, MAUPRAT drops
on one knee, and kisses the
hem of her mantle, unseen by
her*]

BERINGHEN. Ten millions of
apologies —

MAUPRAT. I'll not take one of
them. I have, as yet,
stood, all things — my heart —
my love — my rights.

Julie's tears! — When is this farce
to end?

BERINGHEN. Oh! when you
please. His Majesty requests me,
oon as you infringe his gracious
orders,

introduce you to the Governor
e Bastile. I should have had that
honour

re, but, gad, my foible is good
nature.

can't be hard upon a friend's in-
firmities.

MAUPRAT. I know the King can
send me to the scaffold.

prospect! — but I'm used to it;
and if

Church and Council, by this hour
to-morrow,

way or other settle not the matter,

BERINGHEN. What, my dear Sir?

MAUPRAT. Show you the door,
dear, dear Sir; talk as I please,
with whom

case, in my own house, dear Sir,
until

Majesty shall condescend to find
outer gentleman than you, dear Sir,

To take me out: and now you under-
stand me,

My dear, most dear — Oh, damnably
dear Sir!

DE BERINGHEN. What! almost in a
passion! you will cool

Upon reflection. Well, since *Madame's*
absent,

I'll take a small refreshment. Now,
don't stir;

Be careful; — how's your burgundy?
— I'll taste it —

Finish it all before I leave. Nay,
No form; — you see I make myself at
home. [*Exit DE BERINGHEN*]

DE MAUPRAT [*going to the door, through
which BARADAS had passed*]. Bara-
das! Count!

[*Enter BARADAS*]

You spoke of snares — of vengeance
Sharper than death — be plainer.

BARADAS. What so clear?
Richelieu has but two passions —

DE MAUPRAT. Richelieu!

BARADAS. Yes!

Ambition and revenge — in you both
blended.

First for ambition — Julie is his ward,
Innocent — docile — pliant to his will —

He placed her at the Court — foresaw
the rest —

The King loves Julie!

DE MAUPRAT. Merciful Heaven!
The King!

BARADAS. Such Cupids lend new
plumes to Richelieu's wings:

But the Court etiquette must give such
Cupids

The veil of Hymen — (Hymen but in
name).

He looked abroad — found you his foe;
— *thus served*

Ambition — by the grandeur of his
ward.

And vengeance — by dishonour to his
foe!

DE MAUPRAT. Prove this.

BARADAS. You have the proof —
The royal Letter: —

Your strange exemption from the
general pardon,

Known but to me and Richelieu; can
you doubt

Your friend to acquit your foe? The
truth is glaring —

Richelieu alone could tell the princely
lover

The tale which sells your life, — or
buys your honour!

DE MAUPRAT. I see it all! Mock
pardon — hurried nuptials!
False bounty! — all! — the serpent of
that smile!
Oh! it stings home!

BARADAS. You yet shall crush his
malice;
Our plans are sure: — Orleans is at our
head;
We meet to-night; join us, and with us
triumph.

DE MAUPRAT. To-night? — Oh
Heaven! — my marriage night! —
Revenge!

"BARADAS. What class of men,
whose white lips do not curse
"The grim, insatiate, universal tyrant?
"We, noble-born — where are our an-
tique rights —

"Our feudal seignories — our castled
strength,
"That did divide us from the base
Plebeians

"And made our swords our law —
where are they? — trod

"To dust — and o'er the graves of our
dead power

"Scaffolds are monuments — the Kingly
House

"Shorn of its beams — the Royal Sun
of France

"Clips'd by this blood-red comet.
Where we turn,

"Nothing but Richelieu! — Armies —
Church — State — Laws

"But mirrors that do multiply his
beams.

"He sees all — acts all — Argus and
Briaræus —

"Spy at our boards — and death's-man
at our hearths,

"Under the venom of one laidley night-
shade,

"Wither the lilies of all France.

"DE MAUPRAT [*impatiently*]. But
Julie —"

BARADAS [*unheeding him*]. As yet
the Fiend that serves hath saved
his power

From every snare; and in the epitaphs
Of many victims dwells a warning moral
That preaches caution. Were I not
assured

That what before was hope is ripen'd
now

Into most certain safety, trust me,
Mauprat,

I still could hush my hate and mark my
wrongs,

And say "Be patient!" — Now, the
King himself

Smiles kindly when I tell him that
peers

Will rid him of his Priest. You
your brows,

Noble impatience! — Pass we to
scheme!

'Tis Richelieu's wont, each morn, with
his chapel,

(Hypocrite worship ended) to dispe-
Alms to the Mendicant friars, — in t-
guise

A band (yourself the leader) shall s-
round

And seize the despot.

DE MAUPRAT. But the King?
Julie?

BARADAS. The King, infirm in hea-
in mind more feeble,

Is but the plaything of a Minister's v-
Were Richelieu dead — his power w-

mine; and Louis
Soon shall forget his passion and y-

crime.

But whither now?

DE MAUPRAT. I know not; I sea-
hear thee;

A little while for thought anon
join thee;

But now, all air seems tainted, and
loathe

The face of man!

[*Exit DE MAUPRAT, through
Gardens*]

BARADAS. Start from the chase,
prey,

But as thou speed'st the hell-hound
Revenge

Pant in thy track and dog thee down

[*Enter DE BERINGHEN, his mouth f-
a napkin in his hand*]

DE BERINGHEN. Chevalier,
Your cook's a miracle — what,

Host gone?

Faith, Count, my office is a post-
danger —

A fiery fellow, Mauprat! — touch a-
go, —

Match and saltpetre, — pr-r-r-r!

BARADAS. You
Will be released ere long. The K-

resolves

To call the bride to Court this day.

DE BERINGHEN. Poor Mauprat!
Yet, since you love the lady why

careless
Of the King's suit!

BARADAS. Because the lady's
tuous,

And the King timid. Ere he win
suit

lose the crown, — the bride will
be a widow —

— the Richelieu of the Regent
pleans.

BERINGHEN. Is Louis still so
chafed against the Fox,
watching yon fair dainty from the
lon?

BARADAS. So chafed that Richelieu
utters. Yes, the King
conspirator against the Cardinal.
h of this. I've found the man
e wanted, —

man to head the hands that mur-
der Richelieu —

an, whose name the synonym for
aring.

BERINGHEN. He must mean me!
o, Count, I am — I own,
ant dog — but still —

BARADAS. Whom can I mean
Mauprat? — Mark, to-night we
meet at Marion's,
shall we sign: — thence send this
roll [*showing it*] to Bouillon.
in that secret [*affectionately*] one
our new Council.

BERINGHEN. But to admit the
daniard — France's foe —
he heart of France, — dethrone
the King, —

ks like treason, and I smell the
badsmen.

BARADAS. Oh, Sir, too late to falter:
hen we meet

must arrange the separate —
arser scheme,
ichelieu's death. Of this despatch
Mauprat

nothing learn. He only bites at
vengeance,

he would start from treason. —
We must post him

ut the door at Marion's — as a
ntry.

— So, when his head is on the
ock — his tongue —

t betray our more august designs!

BERINGHEN. I'll meet you, if
the King can spare me. — [*Aside*]
— No!

oo old a goose to play with foxes,
ost at home. Meanwhile in the
ext room

s a delicious pâté, let's discuss it.

BARADAS. Pshaw! a man fill'd with
sublime ambition

o time to discuss your pâtés.

BERINGHEN. Pshaw!

a man fill'd with as sublime a
tâté

Has no time to discuss ambition. — Gad,
I have the best of it!

[*Enter JULIE hastily with first COURTIER*]

JULIE. [*To COURTIER*] A summons,
Sir,
To attend the Louvre? — On *this* day,
too?

COURTIER. *Madame*,
The royal carriage waits below. —
Messire [*to DE BERINGHEN*],
You will return with us.

JULIE. What can this mean? —
Where is my husband?

BARADAS. He has left the house
Perhaps till nightfall — so he bade me
tell you.

Alas, were I the Lord of such fair
treasure —

JULIE [*impatiently*]. Till nightfall?
— Strange — my heart misgives
me!

COURTIER. *Madame*,
My orders will not brook delay.

JULIE. [*To BARADAS*] You'll see
him —

And you will tell him!

BARADAS. From the flowers of Hybla
Never more gladly did the bee bear
honey,

Than I take sweetness from those
rosiest lips,

Though to the hive of others!

COURTIER. [*To DE BERINGHEN*]
Come, Messire.

DE BERINGHEN [*hesitating*]. One mo-
ment, just to —

COURTIER. Come, Sir.

DE BERINGHEN. I shall not

Discuss the pâté after all. 'Ecod,
I'm puzzled now. I don't know who's
the best of it!

[*Exeunt JULIE, DE BERINGHEN,*
and COURTIER]

BARADAS. Now will this fire his
fever into madness!

All is made clear! Mauprat *must* mur-
der Richelieu —

Die for that crime; — I shall console
his Julie —

This will reach Bouillon! — from the
wrecks of France

I shall carve out — who knows — per-
chance a throne!

All in despite of my Lord Cardinal.

[*Enter DE MAUPRAT from the Gardens*]

DE MAUPRAT. Speak! can it be? —
Methought, that from the terrace

I saw the carriage of the King — and
Julie!

No, — no, — my frenzy peoples the
void air

With its own phantoms!

BARADAS. Nay, too true. Alas!

Was ever lightning swifter or more
blasting,

Than Richelieu's forkèd guile?

DE MAUPRAT. I'll to the Louvre —

BARADAS. And lose all hope! — The
Louvre! — the sure gate

To the Bastile!

DE MAUPRAT. The King —

BARADAS. Is but the wax,

Which Richelieu stamps! Break the
malignant seal

And I will rase the print! Come, man,
take heart!

Her virtue well could brave a sterner
trial

Than a few hours of cold imperious
courtship.

Were Richelieu's *dust* — no danger!

DE MAUPRAT. Ghastly Vengeance!
To thee and thine august and solemn
sister

The unrelenting Death! I dedicate
The blood of Armand Richelieu. When
Dishonour

Reaches our hearths Law dies, and
Murder takes

The angel shape of Justice!

BARADAS. Bravely said!

At midnight, — Marion's! — Nay, I
cannot leave thee

To thoughts that —

DE MAUPRAT. Speak not to me! —

I am yours! —

But speak not! There's a voice within
my soul,

Whose cry could drown the thunder! —
Oh, if men

Will play dark sorcery with the heart
of man,

Let them, who raise the spell, beware the
Fiend! [Exeunt]

SCENE SECOND. — *A room in the Palais
Cardinal (as in the First Act).*

[RICHELIEU and JOSEPH. FRAN-
ÇOIS, writing at a table]

JOSEPH. Yes, — Huguet, taking his
accustom'd round, —

Disguised as some plain burgher, —
heard these rufflers

Quoting your name: — he listen'd, —
"Pshaw!" said one.

"We are to seize the Cardinal in his
palace

To-morrow!" — "How?" the ot
ask'd — "You'll hear
The whole design to-night; the D
of Orleans

And Baradas have got the map
action

At their fingers' end." — "So, be
quoth the other,

"I will be there, — Marion de Lorn
— at midnight!"

RICHELIEU. I have them, man
have them!

JOSEPH. So they say

Of you, my Lord; — believe me, t
their plans

Are mightier than you deem. Y
must employ

Means no less vast to meet them.

RICHELIEU. Bah! in policy

We foil gigantic danger, not by giant
But dwarfs. — The statues of our stat
fortune

Are sculptured by the chisel — not
axe!

Ah, were I younger — by the knight
heart

That beats beneath these priestly rol
I would

Have pastime with these cutthroa
Yea — as when,

Lured to the ambush of the expect
foe, —

I clove my pathway through the plun
sea!

Reach me yon falchion, François,
not that bauble

For carpet-warriors — yonder — suc
blade

As old Charles Martel might h
wielded, when

He drove the Saracen from France.

[FRANÇOIS brings him one of
long two-handed swords worn
the middle ages]

With t

I, at Rochelle, did hand to hand eng
The stalwart Englisher — no mongr
boy,

Those island mastiffs — mark the no
— a deep one —

His casque made here, — I shore h
to the waist!

A toy — a feather — then! [Tries
wield, and lets it fall] You se

child could

Slay Richelieu now.

FRANÇOIS [his hand on his hilt]. I
now, at your command

Are other weapons, my good Lord.

RICHELIEU [who has seated himself
to write, lifts the pen]. True, Th

with the rule of men entirely great.
 Power is mightier than the sword.
 Behold
 the arch-enchanter's wand! — itself a
 nothing!
 taking sorcery from the master
 and
 analyse the Cæsars — and to strike
 loud earth breathless! — Take
 away the sword;
 can be saved without it!
[Knocking on the clock] 'Tis the hour!
 Yes, sir. *[Exit FRANÇOIS]*
*[A Knock — A door concealed in
 the arras, opens cautiously]*
[Enter MARION DE LORME]
 EPH *[amazed]*. Marion de Lorme!
 RICHELIEU. Hist! — Joseph,
 guard.
*[JOSEPH retires to the principal
 entrance]*
 faithful Marion!
 MARION. Good my Lord,
 meet to-night in my poor house.
 The Duke
 leans heads them.
 RICHELIEU. Yes; go on.
 MARION. His Highness
 question'd if I knew some brave,
 discreet,
 vigilant man, whose tongue could
 keep a secret,
 who had those twin qualities for
 service,
 love of gold, the hate of Richelieu.
 RICHELIEU. You —
 MARION. Made answer, "Yes, my
 brother; — bold and trusty:
 the faith, my faith could pledge;"
 — the Duke then bade me
 him equipp'd and arm'd — well
 mounted — ready
 to-night to part for Italy.
 RICHELIEU. Aha! —
 Bouillon too turn'd traitor? —
 to methought!
 part of Italy?
 MARION. The Piedmont frontier,
 the Bouillon lies encamp'd.
 RICHELIEU. Now there is danger!
 danger! If he tamper with the
 Spaniard,
 Louis list not to my council, as,
 without sure proof he will not, France
 is lost.
 more?
 MARION. Dark hints of some design
 to seize
 a person in your palace. Nothing
 clear —

His Highness trembled while he spoke
 — the words
 Did choke each other.
 RICHELIEU. So! — Who is the
 brother
 You recommended to the Duke?
 MARION. Whoever
 Your Eminence may father!
 RICHELIEU. Darling Marion!
*[Goes to the table, and returns with
 a large bag of gold]*
 There — pshaw — a trifle! What an
 eye you have!
 And what a smile, child! — *[Kisses her]*
 — Ah! you fair perdition —
 'Tis well I'm old!
 MARION *[aside and seriously]*. What
 a great man he is!
 RICHELIEU. You are sure they meet?
 — the hour?
 MARION. At midnight.
 RICHELIEU. And
 You will engage to give the Duke's
 despatch
 To whom I send?
 MARION. Aye, marry!
 RICHELIEU *[aside]*. Huguet? No;
 He will be wanted elsewhere. Joseph?
 — zealous,
 But too well known — too much the
 elder brother!
 Mauprat? — alas, it is his wedding-day!
 François? — the Man of Men! — un-
 noted — young,
 Ambitious — *[Goes to the door]* François!
[Enter FRANÇOIS]
 Follow this fair lady:
*(Find him the suiting garments,
 Marion;) take*
 My fleetest steed; arm thyself to the
 teeth;
 A packet will be given you, with orders,
 No matter what! The instant that
 your hand
 Closes upon it, clutch it, like your
 honour,
 Which Death alone can steal, or ravish:
 set
 Spurs to your steed — be breathless,
 till you stand
 Again before me. Stay, Sir! — You
 will find me
 Two short leagues hence — at Ruelle,
 in my castle.
 Young man, be blithe! for — note me
 — from the hour
 I grasp that packet, think your guar-
 dian star
 Rains fortune on you!
 FRANÇOIS. If I fail —

RICHELIEU. Fail — fail?
 In the lexicon of youth, which Fate
 reserves
 For a bright manhood, there is no such
 word
 As — *fail!* — (You will instruct him
 further, Marion)
 Follow her — but at distance; — speak
 not to her,
 Till you are housed — Farewell, boy!
 Never say
 “*Fail*” again.

FRANÇOIS. I will not!

RICHELIEU [*patting his locks*]. There’s
 my young hero! —

[*Exeunt FRANÇOIS and MARION*]

So they would seize my person in this
 palace?

I cannot guess their scheme: — but my
 retinue

Is here too large! A single traitor could
 Strike impotent the faith of thousands;
 — Joseph,

Art sure of Huguet? — Think — we
 hang’d his father?

JOSEPH. But you have bought the
 son; — heap’d favours on him!

RICHELIEU. Trash! — favours past —
 that’s nothing; in his hours

Of confidence with you, has he named
 the favours

To come he counts on?

JOSEPH. Yes: — a Colonel’s rank,
 And Letters of Nobility.

RICHELIEU. What, Huguet! —

[*Here HUGUET enters, as to address the CARDINAL, who does not perceive him*]

HUGUET. My own name, soft —
 [*Glides behind the screen*]

RICHELIEU. Colonel and Nobleman!
 My bashful Huguet — that can never
 be! —

We have him not the less — we’ll
 promise it!

And see the King withholds! — Ah,
 Kings are oft

A great convenience to a minister!

No wrong to Huguet either! — Moralists

Say, Hope is sweeter than Possession!
 Yes —

We’ll count on Huguet! Favours past
 do gorge

Our dogs; leave service drowsy — dull
 the scent,

Slacken the speed; — favours to come,
 my Joseph,

Produce a lusty, hungry gratitude,

A ravenous zeal, that of the commonest
 cur

Would make a Cerberus. — You
 right, this treason
 Assumes a fearful aspect; — but
 crush’d,

Its very ashes shall manure the soil
 Of power: and ripen such full sheaves
 greatness,

That all the summer of my fate
 seem

Fruitless beside the autumn!

[*HUGUET holds up his hat
 menacingly, and creeps out*]

JOSEPH. The saints grant it!

RICHELIEU [*solemnly*]. Yes —
 sweet France, Heaven grant
 — O my country,

For thee — thee only — though
 deem it not —

Are toil and terror my familiars! —
 Have made thee great and fair — up
 thy brows

Wreath’d the old Roman laurel; —
 thy feet

Bow’d nations down. — No pulse
 my ambition

Whose beatings were not measur’d
 from thy heart!

“In the old times before us, patriots
 lived

“And died for liberty —

“JOSEPH. As you would live

“And die for despotry —

“RICHELIEU. False monk, not so.

“But for the purple and the power
 wherein

“State clothes herself. — I love my nation
 land

“Not as Venetian, Englisher, or Swiss

“But as a Noble and a Priest of France

““All things for France’ — lo, my
 eternal maxim!

“The vital axle of the restless wheels

“That bear me on! With her, I have
 entwined

“My passions and my fate — my crimes
 my virtues —

“Hated and loved, and schemed, and
 shed men’s blood,

“As the calm crafts of Tuscan artists
 teach

“Those who would make their country
 great. Beyond

“The map of France, my heart
 travel not,

“But fills that limit to its farthest verge

“And while I live — Richelieu and I
 France are one.”

We Priests, to whom the Church forbids
 bids in youth

The plighted one — to manhood’s
 denies

soother helpmate — from our
with'er'd age
s the sweet blossoms of the second
spring
t smiles in the name of Father —
We are yet
holier than Humanity and must
il Humanity's condition — Love!
arr'd the Actual, we but breathe a
life
the chill Marble of the Ideal —
Thus,
hy unseen and abstract Majesty,
France — my Country, I have
bodied forth
ing to love. What are these robes
of state,
pomp, this palace? perishable
baubles!
his world two things only are im-
mortal:
e and a People!

[Enter HUGUET]

HUGUET. My Lord Cardinal,
r Eminence bade me seek you at
this hour.

RICHELIEU. Did I? — True, Huguet.
— So — you overheard
nge talk amongst these gallants?
Snarers and traps
Richelieu? — Well — we'll balk
them; let me think, —
men-at-arms you head — how
many?

HUGUET. Twenty,
Lord.

RICHELIEU. All trusty?

HUGUET. Yes, for ordinary
asions — if for great ones, I would
change
ee-fourths at least!

RICHELIEU. Ay, what are great
occasions?

HUGUET. Great bribes!

RICHELIEU. [To JOSEPH] Good lack,
he knows some paragons
erior to great bribes!

HUGUET. True Gentlemen
o have transgress'd the Laws — and
value life

lack not gold; your Eminence
alone

grant them pardon. *Ergo* you can
trust them!

RICHELIEU. Logic! — So be it —
let this *honest* twenty
arm'd and mounted. — [Aside] So
they meet at midnight,
attempt on me to-morrow. Ho!
we'll strike

'Twixt wind and water. — [Aloud] Does
it need much time

To find these ornaments to Human
Nature?

HUGUET. My Lord — the trustiest
of them are not birds

That love the daylight. — I do know a
haunt

Where they meet nightly.

RICHELIEU. Ere the dawn be grey,
All could be arm'd, assembled, and at
Ruelle

In my own hall?

HUGUET. By one hour after mid-
night.

RICHELIEU. The castle's strong.
You know its outlets, Huguet?

Would twenty men, well posted, keep
such guard

That no one step (and Murther's step
is stealthy)

Could glide within — unseen?

HUGUET. A triple wall,
A drawbridge and portecullis — twenty
men —

Under my lead, a month might hold
that castle

Against a host.

RICHELIEU. They do not strike till
morning,

Yet I will shift the quarter — Bid the
grooms

Prepare the litter — I will to Ruelle

While daylight last — and one hour
after midnight

You and your twenty saints shall seek
me thither!

You're made to rise! — You are, Sir —
Eyes of lynx,

Ears of the stag, a footfall like the snow;
You are a valiant fellow; — yea, a

trusty,

Religious, exemplary, incorrupt,

And precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet!
If I live long enough — ay, mark my

words —

If I live long enough, you'll be a
Colonel, —

Noble, perhaps! — One hour, Sir, after
midnight.

HUGUET. You leave me dumb with
gratitude, my lord;

I'll pick the trustiest [aside] Marion's
house can furnish! [Exit HUGUET]

RICHELIEU. How like a spider shall
I sit in my hole,

And watch the meshes tremble.

JOSEPH. But, my Lord,

Were it not wiser still to man the palace,
And seize the traitors in the act?

RICHELIEU. No; Louis,

Long chafed against me — Julie stolen from him,
 Will rouse him more. — He'll say I hatch'd the treason,
 Or scout my charge — He half desires my death:
 But the despatch to Bouillon, some dark scheme
 Against *his* crown — there is our weapon, Joseph!
 With that all safe — without it, all is peril!
 Meanwhile to my old castle; *you* to Court,
 Diving with careless eyes into men's hearts —
 As ghostly churchmen should do! See the King,
 Bid him pursue that sage and holy treatise,
 Wherein 'tis set forth how a Premier should
 Be chosen from the Priesthood — how the King
 Should never listen to a single charge
 Against his servant, nor conceal one whisper
 That the rank envies of a Court distill
 Into his ear — to fester the fair name
 Of my — I mean his Minister! — Oh! Joseph,
 A most convincing treatise.
 Good! all favours,
 If François be but bold, and Huguet honest. —
 Huguet — I half suspect — he bow'd too low —
 'Tis not his way.
 JOSEPH. This is the curse, my Lord,
 Of your high state; — suspicion of all men.
 RICHELIEU [*sadly*]. True; — true; — my leeches bribed to poisoners; — pages
 To strangle me in sleep. — My very King
 (This brain the unresting loom, from which was woven
 The purple of his greatness) leagued against me.
 Old — childless — friendless — broken — all forsake —
 All — all — but —
 JOSEPH. What?
 RICHELIEU. The indomitable heart
 Of Armand Richelieu!
 JOSEPH. Nought beside?
 RICHELIEU. Why, Julie,
 My own foster-child, forgive me! — yes;
 This morning, shining through their happy tears,

Thy soft eyes bless'd me! and
 Lord, — in danger
 He would forsake me not.
 JOSEPH. And Joseph —
 RICHELIEU [*after a pause*]. You —
 Yes, I believe you — yes — for
 men fear you —
 And the world loves you not. — And
 friend Joseph,
 I am the only man who could,
 Joseph,
 Make you a Bishop — Come, we'll
 to dinner,
 And talk the while of methods to
 vance
 Our Mother Church — Ah, Joseph
Bishop Joseph! [*Exeunt*]

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SECOND DAY (Midnight)

SCENE FIRST. — RICHELIEU'S Castle
*Ruelle. — A Gothic chamber.
 Moonlight at the window, occasionally obscured.*

RICHELIEU [*reading*]. "In silence
 and at night, the Conscience feels
 That life should soar to nobler ends
 than Power."
 So sayest thou, sage and sober moralist
 But wert thou tried? Sublime Philosophy,
 Thou art the Patriarch's ladder, reaching
 ing heaven,
 And bright with beck'ning angels
 but, alas!
 We see thee, like the Patriarch, but
 dreams,
 By the first step — dull-slumbering
 the earth.
 I am not happy! — with the Titan
 lust,
 I woo'd a goddess, and I clasp a clown
 When I am dust, my name shall, like
 a star,
 Shine through wan space, a glory
 and a prophet
 Whereby pale seers shall from their
 airy towers
 Con all the ominous signs, benign
 evil,
 That make the potent astrologues
 kings.
 But shall the Future judge me by their
 ends
 That I have wrought — or by their
 dubious means

gh which the stream of my re-
 own hath run
 the many-voiced unfathomed
 Time?
 in its bed lie weeds — and heaps
 of slime,
 with its waves — when sparkling
 in the sun,
 comes the secret rivulets that swell
 might of waters — blend the hues
 of blood.
 are my sins not those of CIRCUM-
 TANCE,
 all-pervading atmosphere wherein
 spirits like the unsteady lizard,
 take
 tints that colour, and the food that
 tortures?
 ye, whose hour-glass shifts its
 tranquil sands
 the unweary'd silence of a student's
 cell;
 those untampt hearts have never
 loss'd
 the dark and stormy tides where
 life
 battle to the elements, — and
 man
 iles with man for some slight
 plank, whose weight
 bear but one — while round the
 desperate wretch
 hungry billows roar — and the
 fierce Fate,
 some huge monster, dim-seen
 through the surf,
 him who drops; — ye safe and
 normal men,
 write the deeds, and with un-
 weary hand
 in nice scales the motives of the
 Great,
 cannot know what ye have never
 tried!
 ry preserves only the fleshless
 bones
 hat we are — and by the mocking
 skull
 would-be wise pretend to guess the
 features!
 out the roundness and the glow
 of life
 hideous is the skeleton! Without
 colourings and humanities that
 clothe
 errors, the anatomists of schools
 make our memory hideous!
 I have wrought
 t uses out of evil tools — and they
 e time to come may bask beneath
 the light

Which I have stolen from the angry
 gods,
 And warn their sons against the glorious
 theft,
 Forgetful of the darkness which it broke.
 I have shed blood — but I have had no
 foes
 Save those the State had — if my wrath
 was deadly,
 'Tis that I felt my country in my
 veins,
 And smote her sons as Brutus smote his
 own.
 And yet I am not happy — blanch'd
 and sear'd
 Before my time — breathing an air of
 hate,
 And seeing daggers in the eyes of men,
 And wasting powers that shake the
 thrones of earth
 In contest with the insects — bearding
 kings
 And braved by lackies — murder at
 my bed;
 And lone amidst the multitudinous
 web,
 With the dread Three — that are the
 fates who hold
 The woof and shears — the Monk, the
 Spy, the Headsman.
 And this is Power! Alas! I am not
 happy. [After a pause]
 And yet the Nile is fretted by the weeds
 Its rising roots not up: but never yet
 Did one least barrier by a ripple vex
 My onward tide, unswept in sport
 away.
 Am I so ruthless then that I do hate
 Them who hate me? Tush, tush! I
 do not hate;
 Nay, I forgive. The Statesman writes
 the doom,
 But the Priest sends the blessing. I
 forgive them,
 But I destroy; forgiveness is my own,
 Destruction is the State's! For private
 life,
 Scripture the guide — for public,
 Machiavel.
 Would Fortune serve me if the Heaven
 were wroth?
 For chance makes half my greatness.
 I was born
 Beneath the aspect of a bright-eyed
 star,
 And my triumphant adamant of soul
 Is but the fix'd persuasion of success.
 Ah! — here! — that spasm! — Again!
 How Life and Death
 Do wrestle for me momentarily! And
 yet

The King looks pale. I shall outlive
the King!
And then, thou insolent Austrian —
who didst gibe
At the ungainly, gaunt, and daring
lover,
Sneaking thy looks to silken Bucking-
ham, —
Thou shalt — no matter! I have out-
lived love.
O! beautiful — all golden — gentle
Youth!
Making thy palace in the careless front
And hopeful eye of man — ere yet the
soul
Hath lost the memories which (so
Plato dream'd)
Breath'd glory from the earlier star it
dwelt in —
O! for one gale from thine exulting
morning,
Stirring amidst the roses, where of old
Love shook the dew-drops from his
glancing hair!
Could I recall the past — or had not set
The prodigal treasures of the bankrupt
soul
In one slight bark upon the shoreless
sea;
The yoked steer, after his day of toil,
Forgets the goad and rests — to me
alike
Or day or night — Ambition has no rest!
Shall I resign — who can resign himself?
For custom is ourself; — as drink and
food
Become our bone and flesh — the ali-
ments
Nurturing our nobler part, the mind —
thoughts, dreams,
Passions, and aims, in the revolving
cycle
Of the great alchemy — at length are
made
Our mind itself; and yet the sweets of
leisure —
An honour'd home — far from these
base intrigues —
An eyrie on the heaven-kiss'd heights
of wisdom.

[*Taking up the book*]

Speak to me, moralist! I will heed
thy counsel.
Were it not best —

[*Enter FRANÇOIS, hastily and in part
disguised*]

[*flinging away the book*]

Philosophy, thou liest!
Quick — the despatch! — Power —
Empire! Boy — the packet!

FRANÇOIS. Kill me, my Lord.

RICHELIEU. They knew thee — thou
suspected —

They gave it not —

FRANÇOIS. He gave it — he —
Count

De Baradas — with his own hand
gave it!

RICHELIEU. Baradas! Joy!
with it!

FRANÇOIS. Listen,
And then dismiss me to the headsman

RICHELIEU. Ha!

Go on.

FRANÇOIS. They led me to a cha-
ber — There

Orleans and Baradas — and some h
score

Whom I knew not — were met —

RICHELIEU. Not more!

FRANÇOIS. But from

The adjoining chamber broke the
of voices,

The clattering tread of armed men
at times

A shriller cry, that yell'd out, "De-
to Richelieu!"

RICHELIEU. Speak not of me:
country is in danger!

The adjoining room. — So, so
separate treason!

The one thy ruin, France! —
meaner crime,

Left to their tools, my murder!

FRANÇOIS. Baradas

Questioned me close — demurr'd —
til, at last,

O'erruled by Orleans, — gave the pac-
— told me

That life and death were in the scroll
this gold —

RICHELIEU. Gold is no proof —

FRANÇOIS. And Orleans prom-
thousands,

When Bouillon's trumpets in the stre-
of Paris

Rang out shrill answer; hastening fr-
the house,

My footstep in the stirrup, Mar-
stole

Across the threshold, whispering "I
no moment

Ere Richelieu have the packet:
him too —

Murder is in the winds of Night, a-
Orleans

Swears, ere the dawn the Cardinal s-
be clay."

She said, and trembling fled with
when, lo!

A hand of iron griped me; thro' the d

'd the dim shadow of an armed
man :
I could draw — the prize was
rested from me,
a hoarse voice gasp'd — "Spy, I
spare thee, for
steel is virgin to thy Lord!" —
with that
anish'd. — Scared and trembling
or thy safety,
nted, fled, and, kneeling at thy feet,
re thee to acquit my faith — but
ot,
him, to spare my life.
HELIEU. Who spake of life?
e thee grasp that treasure as thine
onour —
el worth whole hecatombs of lives!
e — redeem thine honour — back
to Marion —
aradas or Orleans — track the
obber —
n the packet — or crawl on to
age —
and grey hairs like mine — and
now, thou hast lost
which had made thee great and
aved thy country.
e not till thou'st bought the right
o seek me.
! — Nay, cheer thee — thou hast
ot fail'd yet —
s no such word as "fail!"
ANGOIS. Bless you, my Lord,
that one smile! I'll wear it on my
heart
ght me back to triumph. [Exit]
HELIEU. The poor youth!
lder had ask'd life! I love the
young!
s great men live not in their own
ime
he next race, — so in the young,
ny soul
s many Richelieus. He will win
t yet.
ois! He's gone. My murder!
Marion's warning!
bravo's threat! O for the mor-
ow's dawn! —
t my spies to work — I'll make all
pace
oes the sun) an Universal Eye —
et shall track — Joseph confess —
ha! ha!
ge, while I laugh'd I shudder'd,
nd ev'n now
the chill air the beating of my
heart
ds like a death-watch by a sick
nan's pillow;

If Huguet *could* deceive me — hoofs
without —
The gates uncloset — steps near and
nearer!
[Enter JULIE]
JULIE. Cardinal!
My father! [Falls at his feet]
RICHELIEU. Julie at this hour! —
and tears!
What ails thee?
JULIE. I am safe; I am with thee! —
RICHELIEU. Safe! why in all the
storms of this wild world
What wind would mar the violet?
JULIE. That man —
Why did I love him? — clinging to a
breast
That knows no shelter?
Listen — late at noon —
The marriage-day — ev'n then no more
a lover —
He left me coldly, — well, — I sought
my chamber
To weep and wonder — but to hope
and dream.
Sudden a mandate from the King — to
attend
Forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.
RICHELIEU. Ha! —
You did obey the summons; and the
King
Reproach'd your hasty nuptials. —
JULIE. Were that all!
He frown'd and chid; — proclaim'd the
bond unlawful:
Bade me not quit my chamber in the
palace,
And there at night — alone — this
night — all still —
He sought my presence — dared — thou
read'st the heart,
Read mine! — I cannot speak it!
RICHELIEU. He a king, —
You — woman; well, you yielded!
JULIE. Cardinal —
Dare you say "yielded"? — Humbled
and abash'd,
He from the chamber crept — this
mighty Louis;
Crept like a baffled felon! — yielded!
Ah!
More royalty in woman's honest heart
Than dwells within the crown'd majesty
And sceptred anger of a hundred kings!
Yielded! — Heavens! — yielded!
RICHELIEU. To my breast, — close
— close!
The world would never need a Richelieu,
if
Men — bearded, mailed men — the
Lords of Earth —

Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice,
pride,
As this poor child with the dove's in-
nocent scorn
Her sex's tempters, Vanity and
Power! —

He left you — well!

JULIE. Then came a sharper trial!
At the King's suit the Count de Baradas
Sought me to soothe, to fawn, to
flatter, while

On his smooth lip insult appear'd more
hateful

For the false mask of pity: letting fall
Dark hints of treachery, with a world
of sighs

That heaven had granted to so base a
Lord

The heart whose coldest friendship
were to him

What Mexico to misers! Stung at last
By my disdain, the dim and glimmer-
ing sense

Of his cloak'd words broke into bolder
light,

And THEN — ah, then, my haughty
spirit fail'd me!

Then I was weak — wept — oh! such
bitter tears!

For (turn thy face aside, and let me
whisper

The horror to thine ear) then did I
learn

That he — that Adrien — that my
husband — knew

The King's polluting suit, and deemed
it honour!

Then all the terrible and loathsome
truth

Glared on me; — coldness — wayward-
ness — reserve —

Mystery of looks — words — all un-
ravell'd, — and

I saw the impostor, where I had loved
the God! —

RICHÉLIEU. I think thou wrong'st
thy husband — but proceed.

JULIE. Did you say "wrong'd"
him? — Cardinal, my father,
Did you say "wrong'd"? Prove it,
and life shall grow

One prayer for thy reward and his for-
giveness.

RICHÉLIEU. Let me know all.

JULIE. To the despair he caused
The courtier left me; but amid the
chaos

Darted one guiding ray — to 'scape —
to fly —

Reach Adrien, learn the worst — 'twas
then near midnight:

Trembling I left my chamber — sou-
the Queen —

Fell at her feet — reveal'd the ugh
peril —

Implored her to aid to flee our jo-
disgrace.

Moved, she embraced and soothed
nay, preserved;

Her word sufficed to unlock the pal-
aces:

I hasten'd home — but home was de-
late, —

No Adrien there! Fearing the wo-
I fled

To thee, directed hither. As my wh-
Paused at thy gates — the clang

arms behind —
The ring of hoofs —

RICHÉLIEU. 'Twas but my guar-
fair trembler.

(So Huguet keeps his word, my om-
wrong'd him.)

JULIE. Oh, in one hour what ye-
of anguish crowd!

RICHÉLIEU. Nay, there's no dan-
now. Thou need'st rest.

Come thou shalt lodge beside
Tush! be cheer'd,

My rosier Amazon — thou wrong-
thy Theseus.

All will be well — yes, yet all well.
[*Exeunt through a side door*]

SCENE SECOND. — *The moonlight
scurd at the casement.*

[*Enter HUGUET. DE MAUPRAT, in co-
plete armour, his vizor down*]

HUGUET. Not here!

DE MAUPRAT. Oh, I will find h-
fear not. Hence, and guard
The galleries where the menials sleep
plant sentries

At every outlet. Chance should thr-
no shadow

Between the vengeance and the victi-
Go!

Ere yon brief vapour that obscures
moon,

As doth our deed pale conscience, p-
away,

The mighty shall be ashes.

HUGUET. Will you not

A second arm?

DE MAUPRAT. To slay one w-
old man?

Away! No lesser wrongs than m-
can make

This murder lawful. — Hence!

GUET. A short farewell! [Exit]

Enter RICHELIEU, not perceiving DE MAUPRAT]

RICHELIEU. How heavy is the air!
The vestal lamp
The sad moon, weary with vigil, dies
The still temple of the solemn heaven!
The very darkness lends itself to fear —
Reason —

DE MAUPRAT. And to death!

RICHELIEU. My omens lied not!

What art thou, wretch?

DE MAUPRAT. Thy doomsman!

RICHELIEU. Ho, my guards!

Arrest! Montbrassil! Vermont!

DE MAUPRAT. Ay, thy spirits
Make thee, wizard; thy bold men
Of mail

My confederates. Stir not! but one
step,

I know the next — thy grave!

RICHELIEU. Thou liest, knave!

An old, infirm — most feeble — but
thou liest!

And de Richelieu dies not by the
hand

Man — the stars have said it — and
the voice

My own prophet and oracular soul
Uirms the shining Sibyls! Call them
all —

My brother butchers! Earth has no
such fiend —

As one parricide of his father-land,
dares in Richelieu murder France!

DE MAUPRAT. Thy stars

Give thee, Cardinal; thy soul of
wiles

Against kings and armaments avail,
Mock the embattled world; but
powerless now

Under the sword of one resolved man,
Whose forehead thou hast written
shame!

RICHELIEU. I breathe; — he is not
a hireling. Have I wronged thee?
Are surmise — suspicion — lies!
I am

Great for men to speak the truth
Of me!

DE MAUPRAT. Thy acts are thy
accusers, Cardinal.

Thy hot youth, a soldier, urged to
crime

Under the State, placed in your hands
his life; —

Did not strike the blow, — but,
O'er his head,

On the gossamer thread of your
caprice,

Hovered the axe. — His the brave
spirit's hell,
The twilight terror of suspense; —
your death

Had set him free. — He purposed not,
nor prayed it.

One day you summoned — mocked
him with smooth pardon —

Showered wealth upon him — bade an
Angel's face

Turn earth to paradise —

RICHELIEU. Well!

DE MAUPRAT. Was this mercy?

A Cæsar's generous vengeance? — Car-
dinal, no!

Judas, not Cæsar, was the model! You
Saved him from death for shame; re-
served to grow

The scorn of living men — to his dead
sires

Leprous reproach — scoff of the age to
come —

A kind convenience — a Sir Pandarus
To his own bride, and the august
adulterer!

Then did the first great law of human
hearts,

Which with the patriot's, not the rebel's
name

Crowned the first Brutus, when the
Tarquin fell,

Make Misery royal — raise this des-
perate wretch

Into thy destiny! Expect no mercy!

Behold De Mauprat! [Lifts his visor]

RICHELIEU. To thy knees, and crawl
For pardon; or, I tell thee, thou shalt
live

For such remorse, that, did I hate thee, I
Would bid thee strike, that I might be
avenged!

It was to save my Julie from the King,
That in thy valour I forgave thy
crime; —

It was, when thou — the rash and
ready tool —

Yea of that shame thou loath'st —
did'st leave thy hearth

To the polluter — in these arms thy bride
Found the protecting shelter thine
withheld. [Goes to the side door]

Julie de Mauprat — Julie!

[Enter JULIE]

Lo, my witness!

DE MAUPRAT. What marvel's this?
I dream. My Julie — thou!

This, thy belovèd hand?

JULIE. Henceforth all bond

Between us twain is broken. Were it
not

For this old man, I might, in truth,
have lost

The right — now mine — to scorn thee!
RICHELIEU. So, you hear her!

DE MAUPRAT. Thou with some
slander hast her sense infected!

JULIE. No, Sir; he did excuse thee
in despite

Of all that wears the face of truth. Thy
friend —

Thy *confidant* — familiar — Baradas —
Himself revealed thy baseness.

DE MAUPRAT. Baseness!

RICHELIEU. Ay;
That thou didst *court* dishonour.

DE MAUPRAT. Baradas!
Where is thy thunder, Heaven? —
Duped! — snared! — undone!

Thou — thou could'st not believe him!
Thou dost love me!

Love cannot feed on falsehood!

JULIE [*aside*]. Love him! Ah!
Be still, my heart! Love you I did: —
how fondly,

Woman — if women were my listeners
now —

Alone could tell! — For ever fled my
dream.

Farewell — all's over!

RICHELIEU. Nay, my daughter, these
Are but the blinding mists of day-break
love

Sprung from its very light, and heralding
A noon of happy summer. — Take her
hand

And speak the truth, with which your
heart runs over —

That this Count Judas — this In-
carnate Falsehood —

Never lied more, than when he told
thy Julie

That Adrien loved her not — except,
indeed,

When he told Adrien, Julie could betray
him.

JULIE [*embracing* DE MAUPRAT]. You
love me, then! you love me! —
and they wrong'd you!

DE MAUPRAT. Ah, could'st thou
doubt it?

RICHELIEU. Why, the very mole
Less blind than thou! Baradas loves
thy wife; —

Had hoped her hand — aspired to be
that cloak

To the King's will, which to thy blunt-
ness seems

The Centaur's poisonous robe — hopes
even now

To make thy corpse his footstool to
thy bed!

Where was thy wit, man? Ho, thy
schemes are glass!

The very sun shines through them.
DE MAUPRAT. O, my Lord,

Can you forgive me?
RICHELIEU. Ay, and save you!

DE MAUPRAT. Save! —
Terrible word! — O, save *thyself*; to

halls
Swarm with thy foes; already for t

blood
Pants thirsty murder!

JULIE. Murder!
RICHELIEU. Hush! put by

The woman. Hush! a shriek — a cry
— a breath

Too loud, would startle from its horro
pause

The swooping Death! Go to the do
and listen!

Now for escape!

DE MAUPRAT. None, — no
Their blades shall pass

This heart to thine.

RICHELIEU [*drily*]. An honoura
outwork,

But much too near the citadel. I thi
That I can trust you now [*slowly, a*

gazing on him] — yes;
I can trust you.

How many of my troop league w
you?

DE MAUPRAT. All! —
We are your troop!

RICHELIEU. And Huguet? —
DE MAUPRAT. Is our captain.

RICHELIEU. A retributive Pow
This comes of spies

All? then the lion's skin too short
night, —

Now for the fox's! —
JULIE. A hoarse gathering m

mur! —
Hurrying and heavy footsteps! —

RICHELIEU. Ha, the posterns?
DE MAUPRAT. No egress where

sentry!
RICHELIEU. Follow me —

I have it! to my chamber — quic
Come, Julie!

Hush! Mauprat, come!

[*Murmur at a distance "De
to the Cardinal!"*]

Bloodhounds, I laugh at ye! ha! h
we will

Baffle them yet! Ha! ha!
[*Exeunt* JULIE, MAUPRAT, RIC

LIEU]
HUGUET [*without*]. This way — t
way!

THIRD. — *Enter HUGUET, and the CONSPIRATORS.*

HUGUET. De Mauprat's hand is never slow in battle; —
 He, if it falter now! Ha! gone!
 FIRST CONSPIRATOR. Perchance
 The fox had crept to rest! and to his
 Lair, the dark hunter, tracks him.

MAUPRAT, *throwing open the doors of the recess, in which a bed, whereon RICHELIEU lies extended*

MAUPRAT. Live the King!
 Richelieu is dead!

HUGUET *[advancing towards the recess; MAUPRAT following, his hand on his dagger]*. Are his eyes open?

MAUPRAT. Ay.
 In life!

HUGUET *[turning back]*. I will not look on him.

Have been long.

MAUPRAT. I watched him till he slept.

He. No trace of blood reveals the deed; —

Engled in sleep. His health hath long been broken —

And breathless in his bed. So runs the tale,

Remember! Back to Paris — Orleans lives

A thousand crowns, and Baradas a lordship,

For him who first gluts vengeance with the news

That Richelieu is in Heaven! Quick, that all France

Share your joy.

HUGUET. And you?

MAUPRAT. Will stay to crush suspicion — to forbid sharp

Eyes well too closely on the clay; pre-

pare rites, and place him on his bier — this my task.

Be to you, Sirs, the more grateful for

Health and honours. Hence!

HUGUET. I shall be noble!

MAUPRAT. Away!

SECOND CONSPIRATOR. Five thousand crowns!

THIRD. To horse! to horse!

[Exeunt CONSPIRATORS]

SCENE FOURTH. — *Still night. — A room in the house of COUNT DE BARADAS, lighted, &c.*

[ORLEANS and DE BERINGHEN]

DE BERINGHEN. I understand.
 Mauprat kept guard without:
 Knows nought of the despatch — but
 Heads the troop
 Whom the poor Cardinal fancies his
 protectors.

Save us from such protection!

ORLEANS. Yet if Huguet,
 By whose advice and proffers we re-
 nounced

Our earlier scheme, should still be
 Richelieu's minion,

And play us false —

DE BERINGHEN. The fox must then
 devour

The geese he gripes, I'm out of it, thank
 Heaven!

And you must swear you smelt the
 trick, but seem'd

To approve the deed to render up the
 doers.

[Enter BARADAS]

BARADAS. Julie is fled — the King,
 whom now I left

To a most thorny pillow, vows revenge
 On her — on Mauprat — and on Riche-

lieu! Well;

We loyal men anticipate his wish

Upon the last — and as for Mauprat —
[Showing a writ]

DE BERINGHEN. Hum!

They say the devil invented printing!
 Faith,

He has some hand in writing parch-
 ment — eh, Count?

What mischief now?

BARADAS. The King at Julie's flight
 Enraged will brook no rival in a sub-

ject —

So on this old offence — the affair of
 Faviaux —

Ere Mauprat can tell tales of us, we
 build

His bridge between the dungeon and
 the grave.

ORLEANS. Well; if our courier can
 but reach the army,

The cards are ours! and yet I own,
 I tremble.

Our names are in the scroll — discovery,
 death!

BARADAS. Success, a crown!

DE BERINGHEN *[apart to BARADAS]*.

Our future regent is

No hero.

BARADAS. [To BERINGHEN] But his rank makes others valiant;
And on his cowardice I mount to power.
Were Orleans Regent — what were Bara-
das?

Oh! by the way — I had forgot, your Highness,
Friend Huguet whisper'd me, "Beware of Marion:

I've seen her lurking near the Cardinal's palace."

Upon that hint — I've found her lodgings elsewhere.

ORLEANS. You wrong her, Count: —
Poor Marion! she adores me.

BARADAS [apologetically]. Forgive me, but —

[Enter PAGE]

PAGE. My Lord, a rude, strange soldier,
Breathless with haste, demands an audience.

BARADAS. So!
The Archers!

PAGE. In the ante-room, my Lord,
As you desired.

BARADAS. 'Tis well, admit the soldier. [Exit PAGE]

Huguet! I bade him seek me here!

[Enter HUGUET]

HUGUET. My Lords,
The deed is done. Now Count, fulfil your word,
And make me noble!

BARADAS. Richelieu dead? — art sure?

How died he?

HUGUET. Strangled in his sleep: —
no blood,

No tell-tale violence.

BARADAS. Strangled? monstrous villain!

Reward for murder! Ho, there!

[Stamping]

[Enter CAPTAIN with five ARCHERS]

HUGUET. No, thou durst not!

BARADAS. Seize on the ruffian —
bind him — gag him! Off

To the Bastile!

HUGUET. Your word — your plighted faith!

BARADAS. Insolent liar! — ho, away!

HUGUET. Nay, Count;
I have that about me, which —

BARADAS. Away with him!

[Exeunt HUGUET and ARCHERS]

Now, then, all's safe; Huguet must die
in prison,

So Mauprat: — coax or force the mean
crew

To fly the country. Ha, ha! thy
your Highness,

Great men make use of little men.

DE BERINGHEN. My Lords,
Since our suspense is ended — your
excuse me;

'Tis late, and, *entre nous*, I have no
supp'd yet!

I'm one of the new Council now, my
member;

I feel the public stirring here already;
A very craving monster. *Au revoir!*

[Exit DE BERINGHEN]

ORLEANS. No fear, now Richelieu
dead.

BARADAS. And could he come
To life again, he could not keep life
life —

His power — nor save De Mauprat from
the scaffold, —

Nor Julie from these arms — nor Paris
from

The Spaniard — nor your Highness
from the throne!

All ours! all ours! in spite of my Lord
Cardinal!

[Enter PAGE]

PAGE. A gentleman, my Lord, of a
better mien

Than he who last —

BARADAS. Well, he may enter.

[Exit PAGE]

ORLEANS. Who

Can this be?

BARADAS. One of the conspirators
Mauprat himself, perhaps.

[Enter FRANÇOIS]

FRANÇOIS. My Lord —

BARADAS. Ha, traitor!

In Paris still?

FRANÇOIS. The packet — the des-
patch —

Some knave play'd spy without, and
reft it from me,

Ere I could draw my sword.

BARADAS. Play'd spy without!

Did he wear armour?

FRANÇOIS. Ay, from head to heel.

ORLEANS. One of our band. O
heavens!

BARADAS. Could it be Mauprat?
Kept guard at the door — knew naught

of the despatch —

How HE? — and yet, who other?

FRANÇOIS. Ha, De Mauprat!

night was dark — his visor closed.
 BARADAS. 'Twas he!
 could he guess? — 'sdeath! if he
 should betray us.
 Fate to Richelieu dies with Richelieu — and
 was not great enough for treason.
 Hence!
 Mauprat — beg, steal, filch, or
 force it back,
 as I live, the halter —
 FRANÇOIS. By the morrow
 regain it, *[aside]* and redeem my
 honour! *[Exit FRANÇOIS]*
 ORLEANS. Oh! we are lost —
 BARADAS. Not so! But cause on
 cause
 Mauprat's seizure — silence —
 death! Take courage.
 ORLEANS. Should it once reach the
 King, the Cardinal's arm
 d smite us from the grave.
 BARADAS. Sir, think it not!
 d De Mauprat in my grasp. To-morrow
 France is ours! Thou dark and
 fallen Angel,
 se name on earth's AMBITION —
 thou that mak'st
 throne on treasons, stratagems,
 and murder —
 with thy fierce and blood-red smile
 canst quench
 guiding stars of solemn empire —
 near us —
 we are thine) — and light us to
 the goal! *[Exeunt]*

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

THIRD DAY

THE FIRST. — *The Gardens of the Louvre.*

ORLEANS, BARADAS, DE BERINGHEN, COURTIER, &c.]

ORLEANS. How does my brother
 bear the Cardinal's death?

BARADAS. With grief, when thinking
 of the toils of State;

joy, when thinking on the eyes
 of Julie: —

times he sighs, "Who now shall
 govern France?"

he exclaims — "Who now shall baffle
 Louis?"

[Enter LOUIS and other COURTIER. They uncover]

ORLEANS. Now my Liege, now, I
 can embrace a brother.

LOUIS. Dear Gaston, yes. I do be-
 lieve you love me; —

Richelieu denied it — sever'd us too
 long.

A great man, Gaston! Who shall
 govern France?

BARADAS. Yourself, my Liege. That
 swart and potent star

Eclipsed your royal orb. He serv'd
 the country,

But did he serve, or seek to sway the
 King?

LOUIS. You're right — he was an
 able politician,

That's all. — Between ourselves, Count,
 I suspect

The largeness of his learning — specially
 in falcons — a poor huntsman, too!

BARADAS. Ha — ha!
 Your Majesty remembers —

LOUIS. Ay, the blunder
 Between the *greffier* and the *souillard*
 when —

[Checks and crosses himself]

Alas! poor sinners that we are! we
 laugh

While this great man — a priest, a
 cardinal,

A faithful servant — out upon us!
 BARADAS. Sire,

If my brow wear no cloud, 'tis that the
 Cardinal

No longer shades the King.
 LOUIS *[looking up at the skies]*. Oh,

Baradas!

Am I not to be pitied? — what a day
 For —

BARADAS. Sorrow? — No, Sire!
 LOUIS. Bah! for hunting, man,

And Richelieu's dead; 'twould be an
 indecorum

Till he is buried *[Yawns]* — life is very
 tedious.

I made a madrigal on life last week:
 You do not sing, Count? Pity; you
 should learn.

Poor Richelieu had no ear — yet a great
 man.

Ah! what a weary weight devolves
 upon me!

These endless wars — these thankless
 Parliaments —

The snares in which he tangled States
 and Kings,

Like the old fisher of the fable, Proteus,
 Netting great Neptune's wariest tribes,

and changing

Into all shapes when Craft pursued himself :

Oh, a great man !

BARADAS. Your royal mother said so,

And died in exile.

LOUIS [*sadly*]. True : I loved my mother !

BARADAS. The Cardinal dies. Yet day revives the earth ;

The rivers run not back. In truth, my Liege,

Did your high orb on others shine as him,

Why, things as dull in their own selves as I am

Would glow as brightly with the borrowed beam.

LOUIS. Ahem ! He was too stern.

ORLEANS. A very Nero.

BARADAS. His power was like the Capitol of old —

Built on a human skull.

LOUIS. And, had he lived, I know another head, my Baradas, That would have propp'd the pile : I've seen him eye thee

With a most hungry fancy.

BARADAS [*anxiously*]. Sire, I knew You would protect me.

LOUIS. Did you so : of course ! And yet he had a way with him — a something

That always — But no matter, he is dead.

And, after all, men called his King "The Just",

And so I am. Dear Count, this silliest Julie,

I know not why, she takes my fancy.

Many As fair, and certainly more kind ; but yet

It is so. Count, I am no lustful Tarquin,

And do abhor the bold and frontless vices

Which the Church justly censures : yet 'tis sad

On rainy days to drag out weary hours, Deaf to the music of a woman's voice —

Blind to the sunshine of a woman's eyes. It is no sin in kings to seek amusement ;

And that is all I seek. I miss her much.

She has a silver laugh — a rare perfection.

BARADAS. Richelieu was most disloyal in that marriage.

LOUIS [*querulously*]. He knew that Julie pleased me — a clear proof

He never loved me !

BARADAS. Oh, most clear ! — But now

No bar between the lady and your will This writ makes all secure : a week

two

In the Bastile will sober Mauprat's love And leave him eager to dissolve a hymn

That brings him such a home.

LOUIS. See to it, Count ; [*Exit BARADAS*]

I'll summon Julie back. A word with you.

[*Takes aside FIRST COURTIER and DE BERINGHEN, and passes conversing with them, through the gardens*]

[*Enter FRANÇOIS*]

FRANÇOIS. All search, as yet, vain for Mauprat ! Not

At home since yesternoon — a soldier told me

He saw him pass this way with hasty strides ;

Should he meet Baradas — they'd rend it from him —

And then — benignant Fortune smile upon me —

I am thy son ! — if thou desert'st me now,

Come Death and snatch me from disgrace. But, no,

There's a great Spirit ever in the air That from prolific and far-spreading

wings Scatters the seeds of honour — yet the walls

And moats of castled forts — the barren seas —

The cell wherein the pale-eyed student holds

Talk with melodious science — all as sown

With everlasting honours, if our souls Will toil for fame as boors for bread —

[*Enter MAUPRAT*]

MAUPRAT. Oh, let me —

Let me but meet him foot to foot — I'll dig

The Judas from his heart ; — albeit the King

Should o'er him cast the purple !

FRANÇOIS. Mauprat ! hold : —

Where is the —

MAUPRAT. Well ! What would'st thou ?

FRANÇOIS. The despatch !

The packet. — Look ON ME — I serve the Cardinal —

know me. Did you not keep guard last night

Marion's house?

MAUPRAT. I did: — no matter now! —

He told me, *he was here!* —

FRANÇOIS. O joy! quick — quick — packet thou didst wrest from me?

MAUPRAT. The packet? —

It, art thou he I deem'd the Cardinal's spy

(*He that I was*) — and overhearing Marion —

FRANÇOIS. The same — restore it! haste!

MAUPRAT. I have it not:

I sought it but reveal'd our scheme to Richelieu,

as we mounted, gave it to —

[Enter BARADAS]

Stand back!

Villain! now — I have thee!

FRANÇOIS] — Hence, Sir, *Draw!*

FRANÇOIS. Art mad? — the King's at hand! leave him to Richelieu!

MAUPRAT [dashing him aside, and rushing to BARADAS].

A triple slanderer!

Let my heel upon thy crest!

[A few passes]

FRANÇOIS. Fly — fly!

King! —

At one side LOUIS, ORLEANS, DE BERINGHEN, COURTIERS, etc. At the other, the GUARDS hastily]

LOUIS. Swords drawn — before our very palace!

Our laws died with Richelieu?

BARADAS. Pardon, Sire, — crime but self-defence. [Aside to KING]

It is De Mauprat!

LOUIS. Dare he thus brave us?

[BARADAS goes to the GUARD and gives the writ]

MAUPRAT. Sire, in the Cardinal's name —

BARADAS. Seize him — disarm — to the Bastile!

[DE MAUPRAT seized, struggles with the GUARD. — FRANÇOIS restlessly endeavouring to pacify and speak to him — when the gates open]

RICHELIEU and JOSEPH, followed by arquebusiers]

BARADAS. The Dead

born'd to life!

LOUIS. What a mock death! this tops

The Infinite of Insult.

MAUPRAT [breaking from GUARDS]. Priest and Hero!

For you are both — protect the truth! —

RICHELIEU. What's this?

[Taking the writ from the GUARD]

DE BERINGHEN. Fact in Philosophy.

Foxes have got

Nine lives as well as cats!

BARADAS. Be firm, my Liege.

LOUIS. I have assumed the sceptre — I will wield it!

JOSEPH. The tide runs counter — there'll be shipwreck somewhere.

[BARADAS and ORLEANS keep close to the KING — whispering and prompting him when RICHIEU speaks]

RICHELIEU. High treason. — Faviaux! still that stale pretence!

My Liege, bad men (ay, Count, most knavish men!)

Abuse your royal goodness. For this soldier,

France hath none braver, and his youth's hot folly,

Misled (by whom your Highness may conjecture!),

Is long since cancell'd by a loyal manhood.

I, Sire, have pardoned him.

LOUIS. And we do give

Your pardon to the winds. Sir, do your duty!

RICHELIEU. What, Sire? you do not know — Oh, pardon me —

You know not yet, that this brave, honest heart

Stood between mine and murder! — Sire, for my sake —

For your old servant's sake — undo this wrong.

See, let me rend the sentence.

LOUIS. At your peril!

This is too much: — Again, Sir, do your duty!

RICHELIEU. Speak not, but go: — I would not see young Valour

So humbled as grey Service!

DE MAUPRAT. Fare you well!

Save Julie and console her.

FRANÇOIS [aside to MAUPRAT]. The despatch!

Your fate, foes, life, hang on a word! to whom?

DE MAUPRAT. To Huguet.

FRANÇOIS. Hush! — keep council! silence — hope!

[Exeunt MAUPRAT and GUARD]

BARADAS [*aside to FRANÇOIS*]. Has he the packet?
 FRANÇOIS. He will not reveal —
 [*Aside*] Work, brain! beat, heart!
 “*There’s no such word as fail.*”

[*Exit FRANÇOIS*]
 RICHELIEU [*fiercely*]. Room, my Lords, room! — the Minister of France
 Can need no intercession with the King.
 [*They fall back*]

LOUIS. What means this false report of death, Lord Cardinal?

RICHELIEU. Are you then anger’d, Sire, that I live still?

LOUIS. No; but such artifice —
 RICHELIEU. Not mine: — look elsewhere!

Louis — my castle swarm’d with the assassins.

BARADAS [*advancing*]. We have punish’d them already.

Huguot now
 In the Bastile. Oh! my Lord, *we* were prompt
 To avenge you, *we* were.

RICHELIEU. *We*? Ha! ha! you hear,

My Liege! What page, man, in the last court grammar

Made you a plural? Count, you have seized the *hireling*: —

Sire, shall I name the *master*?
 Louis. Tush! my Lord,

The old contrivance: — ever does your wit

Invent assassins, — that ambition may slay rivals —

RICHELIEU. Rivals, Sire! in what? Service to France? *I have none!*
 Lives the man

Whom Europe, paled before your glory, deems

Rival to Armand Richelieu?
 Louis. What so haughty!

Remember, he who made, can unmake.
 RICHELIEU. Never!

Never! Your anger can recall your trust,

Annul my office, spoil me of my lands,
 Rifle my coffers, — but my name —

my deeds,
 Are royal in a land beyond your sceptre!

Pass sentence on me, if you will; from kings,

Lo, I appeal to Time! “Be just, my Liege —

“I found your kingdom rent with heresies

“And bristling with rebellion; lawless nobles

“And breadless serfs; England fomenting discord;

“Austria — her clutch on your dominion; Spain

“Forging the prodigal gold of either Ind

“To armed thunderbolts. The Army lay dead,

“Trade rotted in your marts, your Armies mutinous,

“Your Treasury bankrupt. Would you now revoke

“Your trust, so be it! and I leave you sole

“Supremest Monarch of the mightiest realm

“From Ganges to the Icebergs: — Look without,

“No foe not humbled! Look within the Arts

“Quit for your schools — their own Hesperides

“The golden Italy! while through the veins

“Of your vast empire flows in strengthening tides

“TRADE, the calm health of nations! Sire, I know

“Your smoother courtiers please you best — nor measure

“Myself with them — yet sometimes would doubt

“If Statesmen rock’d and dandled in power

“Could leave such legacies to kings!”
 [*LOUIS appears irresolute*]

BARADAS [*passing him, whispers*]. B. Julie,

Shall I not summon her to Court?
 Louis [*motions to BARADAS and turns haughtily to the CARDINAL*]. Enough!

Your Eminence must excuse a long audience.

To your own palace: — For our conference, this

Nor place — nor season.

RICHELIEU. Good my Liege, for Justice

All place a temple, and all seasons summer!

Do you deny me justice? Saints Heaven!

He turns from me! *Do you deny justice?*

For fifteen years, while in these hands dwelt Empire,

The humblest craftsman — the obscurest vassal —

The very leper shrinking from the sun
 Tho’ loathed by Charity, might ask for justice! —

with the fawning tone and crawling mien
 some I see around you — Counts and Princes —
 kneeling for favours; but, erect and loud,
 men who ask man's rights! my Liege, my Louis,
 you refuse me justice — audience even —
 the pale presence of the baffled Murder?
 LOUIS. Lord Cardinal — one by one you have sever'd from me
 bonds of human love. All near and dear
 I'd out for vengeance — exile or the scaffold.
 I find me now amidst my trustiest friends,
 closest kindred; — you would tear them from me;
 you murder *you* forsooth, since *me* they love.
 ' of plots and treasons for one reign!
 Home! And sleep away these phantoms!
 RICHELIEU. Sire!
 patience, Heaven! sweet Heaven!
 — Sire, from the foot
 that Great Throne, these hands have raised aloft
 an Olympus, looking down on mortals
 I worshipp'd by their awe — before the foot
 that high throne — spurn you the grey-hair'd man,
 who gave you empire — and now sues for safety?
 LOUIS. No: — when we see your Eminence in truth
 the foot of the throne — we'll listen to you. [Exit LOUIS]
 ORLEANS. Saved!
 BARADAS. For this deep thanks to Julie and to Mauprat.
 RICHELIEU. My Lord de Baradas, I pray your pardon —
 you are to be my successor! your hand, Sir!
 BARADAS [aside]. What can this mean?
 RICHELIEU. It trembles, see! it trembles!
 the hand that holds the destinies of nations
 ought to shake less! poor Baradas! poor France!
 BARADAS. Insolent — [Exeunt]

SCENE SECOND.

RICHELIEU. Joseph — Did you hear the King?
 JOSEPH. I did, — there's danger! Had you been less haughty —
 RICHELIEU. And suffer'd slaves to chuckle — "see the Cardinal —
 How meek his Eminence is to-day." I tell thee
 This is a strife in which the loftiest look
 Is the most subtle armour —
 JOSEPH. But —
 RICHELIEU. No time
 For ifs and buts. I will accuse these traitors!
 François shall witness that De Baradas
 Gave him the secret missive for De Bouillon,
 And told him life and death were in the scroll.
 I will — I will —
 JOSEPH. Tush! François is your creature;
 So they will say and laugh at you! —
your witness
 Must be that same Despatch.
 RICHELIEU. Away to Marion!
 JOSEPH. I have been there — she is seized — removed — imprisoned —
 By the Count's orders.
 RICHELIEU. Goddess of bright dreams,
 My Country — shalt thou lose me now, when most
 Thou need'st thy worshipper? My native land!
 Let me but ward this dagger from thy heart,
 And die — but on thy bosom.
 [Enter JULIE]
 JULIE. Heaven! I thank thee!
 It cannot be, or this all-powerful man
 Would not stand idly thus.
 RICHELIEU. What dost thou here? Home!
 JULIE. Home! is *Adrien* there? — you're dumb — yet strive
 For words; I see them trembling on your lip,
 But choked by pity. It was truth — all truth!
 Seized — the Bastile — and in your presence too!
 Cardinal, where is *Adrien*? Think — he saved
 Your life: — your name is infamy, if wrong

Should come to his!

RICHELIEU. Be sooth'd, child.

JULIE. Child no more;

I love, and I am woman! Hope and suffer —

Love, suffering, hope, — what else does make the strength

And majesty of woman? Where is Adrien?

RICHELIEU. [*To JOSEPH*] Your youth was never young — you never loved; Speak to her —

JOSEPH. Nay, take heed — the King's command, 'Tis true — I mean — the —

JULIE. [*To RICHELIEU*] Let thine eyes meet mine;

Answer me but one word — I am a wife —

I ask thee for my home — my FATE — my ALL!

Where is my husband?

RICHELIEU. You are Richelieu's ward,

A soldier's bride: they who insist on truth

Must out-face fear; you ask me for your husband!

There — where the clouds of heaven look darkest, o'er

The domes of the Bastile!

JULIE. I thank you, father, You see I do not shudder. Heaven forgive you

The sin of this desertion!

RICHELIEU [*detaining her*]. Whither would'st thou?

JULIE. Stay me not. Fie; I should be there already.

I am thy ward, and haply he may think

Thou'st taught me also to forsake the wretched!

RICHELIEU. I've fill'd those cells — with many — traitors all.

Had *they* wives too? Thy memories, Power, are solemn!

Poor sufferer! think'st thou that yon gates of woe

Unbar to love? Alas! if love once enter,

'Tis for the last farewell; between those walls

And the mute grave — the blessed household sounds

Only heard once — while hungering at the door,

The headsman whets the axe.

JULIE. O, mercy, mercy! Save him, restore him, father! Art thou not

The Cardinal-King? — the Lord life and death —

Beneath whose light as deeps beneath the moon,

The solemn tides of Empire ebb and flow? —

Art thou not Richelieu?

RICHELIEU. Yesterday I was! — To-day a very weak old man! To-morrow,

I know not what!

JULIE. Do you conceive his meaning?

Alas! I cannot. But, methinks, my senses

Are duller than they were!

JOSEPH. The King is chafed Against his servant. Lady, while you

speak, The lackey of the ante-room is not

More powerless than the Minister of France.

"RICHELIEU. And yet the air still; Heaven wears no cloud;

"From Nature's silent orbit starts portent

"To warn the unconscious world, albeit, this night

"May with a morrow teem which, my fall,

"Would carry earthquake to remote lands,

"And change the Christian globe. What would'st thou, woman?

"Thy fate and his, with mine, for good or ill,

"Are woven threads. In my vast span of life,

"Millions such units merge."

[*Enter FIRST COURTIER*]

FIRST COURTIER. Madame de Mazarin!

Pardon, your Eminence — even now I seek

This lady's home — commanded by the King

To pray her presence.

JULIE [*clinging to RICHELIEU*]. This of my dead father! —

Think, how, an infant, clinging to your knees,

And looking to your eyes, the wrinkled care

Fled from your brow before the smile of childhood,

Fresh from the dews of heaven! Think of this,

And take me to your breast.

RICHELIEU. To those who seek you! —

say, you found the virtue they would slay
— couch'd upon this heart, as at an altar,
sheltered by the wings of sacred Rome!
gone!

FIRST COURTIER. My Lord, I am your friend and servant —
judge me not; but never yet was Louis

roused against you: — shall I take this answer? —

ere to be your foe.

RICHELIEU. All time my foe
a Priest could cast this holy Sorrow
from her last Asylum!

FIRST COURTIER. He is lost! *[Exit]*

RICHELIEU. God help thee, child!
— she hears not! Look upon her!
storm that rends the oak, uproots
the flower.

father loved me so! and in that age
on friends are brothers! She has
been to me
her, nurse, plaything, daughter.
Are these tears?

shame, shame! — dotage!

JOSEPH. Tears are not for eyes
t rather need the lightning, which
can pierce
ough barred gates and triple walls,
to smite

ne, where it cowers in secret! The
Despatch!

every spy to work; the morrow's
sun

st see that written treason in your
hands,

ise upon your ruin.

RICHELIEU. Ay — and close
n my corpse! I am not made to
live —

nds, glory, France, all reft from
me; — my star

e some vain holiday mimicry of fire,
cing imperial heaven, and falling
down

less and blacken'd to the dust —
a thing

all men's feet to trample! Yea!
to-morrow

umph or death! Look up, child! —
Lead us, Joseph.

[As they are going out]

Enter BARADAS and DE BERINGHEN]

BARADAS. My Lord, the King can-
not believe your Eminence
ar forgets your duty, and his great-
ness,

As to resist his mandate! Pray you,
Madam,

Obeys the King — no cause for fear!

JULIE. My father!

RICHELIEU. She shall not stir!

BARADAS. You are not of her kin-
dred —

An orphan —

RICHELIEU. And her country is her
mother!

BARADAS. The country is the King!

RICHELIEU. Ay, is it so?

Then wakes the power which in the
age of iron

Burst forth to curb the great, and raise
the low.

Mark, where she stands, around her
form I draw

The awful circle of our solemn Church!
Set but a foot within that holy ground,

And on thy head — yea, though it wore
a crown —

I launch the curse of Rome!

BARADAS. I dare not brave you!

I do but speak the orders of my King.

The Church, your rank, power, very
word, my Lord,

Suffice you for resistance: — blame
yourself,

If it should cost you power!

RICHELIEU. That *my* stake. Ah!

Dark gamester! *what is thine?* Look
to it well! —

Lose not a trick. By this same hour
to-morrow

Thou shalt have France, or I thy head!

BARADAS *[aside to DE BERINGHEN]*.
He cannot

Have the despatch?

DE BERINGHEN. No: were it so,
your stake

Were lost already.

JOSEPH *[aside]*. Patience is your
game:

Reflect you have not the Despatch!

RICHELIEU. O! monk!

Leave patience to the saints — for *I*
am human!

Did not thy father die for France, poor
orphan?

And now they say thou hast *no* father!
Fie!

Art thou not pure and good? if so, thou
art

A part of that — the Beautiful, the
Sacred —

Which in all climes, men that have
hearts adore,

By the great title of their mother
country!

BARADAS *[aside]*. He wanders!

RICHELIEU. So cling close unto my breast,
Here where thou droop'st — lies France!
I am very feeble —
Of little use it seems to either now.
Well, well — we will go home.

BARADAS. In sooth, my Lord,
You do need rest — the burthens of
the State

O'ertask your health!

RICHELIEU. [*To JOSEPH*] I'm patient, see?

BARADAS [*aside*]. His mind
And life are breaking fast!

RICHELIEU [*overhearing him*]. Irreverent ribald!

If so, beware the falling ruins! Hark!
I tell thee, scorner of these whitening
hairs,

When this snow melteth there shall
come a flood!

Avaunt! my name is Richelieu — I
defy thee!

Walk blindfold on; behind thee stalks
the headsman.

Ha! ha! — how pale he is! Heaven
save my country!

[*Falls back in JOSEPH's arms*]
[*Exit BARADAS followed by DE*
BERINGHEN, *betraying his ex-*
ultation by his gestures]

END OF ACT IV

ACT V

SCENE FIRST. — *The Bastile — a corridor — in the background the door of one of the condemned cells.*

[*Enter JOSEPH and GAOLER*]

GAOLER. Stay, father, I will call
the governor. [*Exit GAOLER*]

JOSEPH. He has it, then — this
Huguet; — so we learn

From François — Hump! Now if I
can but gain

One moment's access, all is ours! The
Cardinal

Trembles 'tween life and death. His
life is power: —

Smite one — slay both! No Æscula-
pian drugs,

By learned quacks baptised with Latin
jargon,

E'er bore the healing which that scrap
of parchment

Will medicine to Ambition's flagging
heart.

France shall be saved — and Josep
be a bishop!

[*Enter GOVERNOR and GAOLER*]

GOVERNOR. Father, you wish to
see the prisoners Huguet
And the young knight De Mauprat?

JOSEPH. So my office,
And the Lord Cardinal's order warrant
son!

GOVERNOR. Father, it cannot be
Count Baradas
Has summon'd to the Louvre Sieur D
Mauprat.

JOSEPH. Well, well! But Huguet —
GOVERNOR. Dies at noon.

JOSEPH. At noon!
No moment to delay the pious rites
Which fit the soul for death — quick
quick — admit me!

GOVERNOR. You cannot enter
monk! Such are my orders!

JOSEPH. Orders! vain man! — the
Cardinal still is minister.

His orders crush all others!

GOVERNOR [*lifting his hat*]. Save hi
King's!

See, monk, the royal sign and sea
affix'd

To the Count's mandate. None ma
have access

To either prisoner, Huguet or D
Mauprat,

Not even a priest, without the specia
passport

Of Count de Baradas. I'll hear m
more!

JOSEPH. Just Heaven! and are w
baffled thus! — Despair!

Think on the Cardinal's power — be
ware his anger.

GOVERNOR. I'll not be menaced
Priest! Besides, the Cardinal

Is dying and disgraced — all Pari
knows it.

You hear the prisoner's knell.

[*Bell tolls*]

JOSEPH. I do beseech you —
The Cardinal is *not* dying — But on

moment,
And — hist! — five thousand pis
toles! —

GOVERNOR. How! a bribe,
And to a soldier, grey with years o
honour?

Begone! —

JOSEPH. Ten thousand — twenty! —
GOVERNOR. Gaoler — put

This monk without our walls.

JOSEPH. By those grey hairs,
Yea, by this badge [*touching the Cross o*

St. Louis worn by the GOVERNOR
 — the guerdon of your valour —
 All your toils, hard days and sleepless
 nights —
 in your country's service, noble
 son —
 me but see the prisoner! —
 GOVERNOR. No! —
 SEPH. He hath
 ets of state — papers in which —
 GOVERNOR [*interrupting*]. I know,
 was his message to Count Baradas.
 tless the Count will see to it.
 SEPH. The Count!
 a not a hope! — You shall —
 GOVERNOR. Betray my trust!
 er — not one word more — you
 heard me, gaoler?
 SEPH. What can be done? —
 distraction! — Richelieu yet
 t — what? — I know not —
 thought, nerve, strength, forsake
 me.
 you refuse the Church her holiest
 rights?
 GOVERNOR. I refuse nothing — I
 obey my orders —
 SEPH. And sell your country to
 her parricides!
 tremble yet! — Richelieu —
 GOVERNOR. Begone!
 SEPH. Undone! [*Exit JOSEPH*]
 GOVERNOR. A most audacious
 shaveling, interdicted
 re all others by the Count —
 GAOLER. I hope, Sir,
 all not lose my perquisites. The
 Sieur
 Mauprat will not be reprieved?
 GOVERNOR. Oh, fear not.
 Count's commands by him who
 came for Mauprat
 to prepare headsman and axe by
 noon;
 Count will give you perquisites
 enough;
 deaths in one day!
 GAOLER. Sir, may Heaven reward
 him!
 by the way, that troublesome
 young fellow,
 calls himself the prisoner Huguet's
 son,
 re again — implores, weeps, raves,
 to see him.
 GOVERNOR. Poor youth, I pity him!
 er DE BERINGHEN, followed by
 FRANÇOIS]
 E BERINGHEN. [*To FRANÇOIS*]
 Now, prithee, friend,

Let go my cloak; you really discom-
 pose me.
 FRANÇOIS. No, they will drive me
 hence; my father! Oh!
 Let me but see him once — but once
 — one moment!
 DE BERINGHEN. [*To GOVERNOR*]
 Your servant, Messire, — this poor
 rascal, Huguet,
 Has sent to see the Count de Baradas
 Upon state secrets, that afflict his
 conscience.
 The Count can't leave his Majesty an
 instant:
 I am his proxy.
 GOVERNOR. The Count's word is
 law!
 Again, young scapegrace! How com'st
 thou admitted?
 DE BERINGHEN. Oh, a most filial
 fellow: Huguet's son!
 I found him whimpering in the court
 below.
 I pray his leave to say good-bye to
 father,
 Before that very long unpleasant
 journey
 Father's about to take. Let him wait
 here
 Till I return.
 FRANÇOIS. No; take me with you.
 DE BERINGHEN. Nay;
 After me, friend — the Public first!
 GOVERNOR. The Count's
 Commands are strict. No one must
 visit Huguet
 Without his passport.
 DE BERINGHEN. Here it is! Pshaw!
 nonsense!
 I'll be your surety. See, my Cerberus,
 He is no Hercules!
 GOVERNOR. Well, you're responsible.
 Stand there, friend. If, when you come
 out, my Lord,
 The youth slip in, 'tis *your* fault.
 DE BERINGHEN. So it is!
 [*Exit through the door of the cell
 followed by the GAOLER*]
 GOVERNOR. Be calm, my lad. Don't
 fret so. I had once
 A father too! I'll not be hard upon
 you,
 And so stand close. I must not see
 you enter:
 You understand. Between this in-
 nocent youth
 And that intriguing monk there is, in
 truth,
 A wide distinction.

[*Re-enter GAOLER*]

Come, we'll go our rounds;
I'll give you just one quarter of an hour;
And if my Lord leave first, make my
excuse.

Yet stay, the gallery's long and dark;
no sentry

Until he reach the grate below. He'd
best

Wait till I come. If he should lose
the way,

We may not be in call.

FRANÇOIS. I'll tell him, Sir —

[*Exeunt GOVERNOR and GAOLER*]

He's a wise son that knoweth his own
father.

I've forged a precious one! So far,
so well!

Alas, what then? this wretch has sent
to Baradas —

Will sell the scroll to ransom life. Oh,
Heaven!

On what a thread hangs hope!

[*Listens at the door*]

Loud words — a cry!

[*Looks through the key-hole*]

They struggle! Ho! — the packet!!!

[*Tries to open the door*] Lost! He
has it —

The courtier has it — Huguet, spite
his chains,

Grapples! — well done! Now, now!

[*Draws back*]

The gallery's long!

And this is left us!

[*Drawing his dagger, and standing
behind the door*]

[*Re-enter DE BERINGHEN, with the
packet*]

Victory!

Yield it, robber —

Yield it — or die — [A short struggle]

DE BERINGHEN. Off! ho! — there!

FRANÇOIS [*grappling with him*]. Death
or honour! [*Exeunt struggling*]

SCENE THIRD. — *The KING's closet at
the Louvre. A suite of rooms in
perspective at one side.*

[BARADAS and ORLEANS]

BARADAS. All smiles! the Cardinal's
swoon of yesterday
Heralds his death to-day; could he
survive,

It would not be as minister — so great
The King's resentment at the priest's
defiance.

All smiles! and yet, should this a
curs'd De Mauprat
Have given our packet to another.
'Sdeath!

I dare not think of it!

ORLEANS. You've sent to search
him?

BARADAS. Sent, Sir, to search?
that hireling hands may find

Upon him, naked, with its broken seal
That scroll, whose every word is death

No — no —

These hands alone must clutch the
awful secret.

I dare not leave the palace, night or day
While Richelieu lives — his minions —
creatures — spies —

Not one must reach the King!

ORLEANS. What hast thou done?

BARADAS. Summon'd De Mauprat
hither!

ORLEANS. Could this Huguet,
Who pray'd thy presence with so fier
a fervour,

Have thieved the scroll?

BARADAS. Huguet was housed with
us,

The very moment we dismiss'd the
courier.

It cannot be! a stale trick for a
prieve.

But, to make sure, I've sent our trustie
friend

To see and sift him — Hist! here comes
the King.

How fare you, Sire?

[*Enter LOUIS*]

LOUIS. In the same mind, I have
Decided! yes, he would forbid your
presence,

My brother, — your's, my friend, the
Julie, too;

Thwarts — braves — defies — [*Su
denly turning to BARADAS*] W
make you minister.

Gaston, for you — the baton of our
armies.

You love me, do you not?

ORLEANS. Oh, love you, Sire?

[*Aside*] Never so much as now.

BARADAS. May I deserve

Your trust [*aside*] — until you sign
your abdication!

My Liege, but one way left to daunt
De Mauprat,

And Julie to divorce. — We must
prepare

The death-writ; what, tho' sign'd and
seal'd? we can

Withhold the enforcement.

LOUIS. Ah, you may prepare it; need not urge it to effect.
BARADAS. Exactly!
haste, my Liege. [*Looking at his watch and aside*] He may live one hour longer.

[*Enter COURTIER*]

COURTIER. The Lady Julie, Sire, implores an audience.

LOUIS. Aha! repentant of her folly! — Well, sit her.

BARADAS. Sire, she comes for Mauprat's pardon, the conditions —

LOUIS. You are minister, leave to you our answer.

JULIE *enters*, — the CAPTAIN of the ARCHERS, by another door — and *whispers* BARADAS]

CAPTAIN. The Chevalier Mauprat waits below.

BARADAS [*aside*]. Now the despatch! [*Exit with OFFICER*]

[*Enter JULIE*]

JULIE. My Liege, you sent for me. I come where Grief should come when guiltless, while the name of King is holy on the earth! — Here, at the feet

power, I kneel for mercy.

LOUIS. Mercy, Julie, in an affair of state. The Cardinal should

be your interpreter.

JULIE. Alas!

How not if that mighty spirit now bow to the things of earth. Nay, while I speak, chance he hears the orphan by the throne

where kings themselves need pardon; O, my Liege,

rather to the fatherless; in you lies my last hope!

[*Enter BARADAS*]

BARADAS [*aside*]. He has not the despatch; sed, while we search'd, and braves me. — Oh!

LOUIS [*gently*]. What would'st thou?

JULIE. A single life. — You reign o'er millions. — What

one man's life to you? — and yet to me

France, — 'tis earth, — 'tis everything! — a life —

A human life — my husband's.

LOUIS [*aside*]. Speak to her, I am not marble, — give her hope — or —

BARADAS. Madam, Vex not your King, whose heart, too soft for justice,

Leaves to his ministers that solemn charge. [*LOUIS walks up the stage*]

JULIE. You were his friend.

BARADAS. I was before I loved thee.

JULIE. Loved me!

BARADAS. Hush, Julie; could'st thou misinterpret

My acts, thoughts, motives, nay, my very words,

Here — in this palace?

JULIE. Now I know I'm mad, Even that memory fail'd me.

BARADAS. I am young, Well-born and brave as Mauprat: — for thy sake

I peril what he has not — fortune — power;

All to great souls most dazzling. I alone

Can save thee from yon tyrant, now my puppet!

Be mine; annul the mockery of this marriage,

And on the day I clasp thee to my breast

De Mauprat shall be free.

JULIE. Thou durst not speak Thus in *his* ear. [*Pointing to LOUIS*]

Thou double traitor! — tremble.

I will unmask thee.

BARADAS. I will say thou ravest, And see this scroll! its letters shall be blood!

Go to the King, count with me word for word;

And while you pray the life — I write the sentence!

JULIE. Stay, stay. [*Rushing to the KING*] You have a kind and princely heart,

Tho' sometimes it is silent: you were born

To power — it has not flushed you into madness,

As it doth meaner men. Banish my husband —

Dissolve our marriage — cast me to the grave

Of human ties, where hearts congeal to ice,

In the dark convent's everlasting winter —

(Surely eno' for justice — hate — revenge —)

But spare this life, thus lonely, scathed,
and bloomless;
And when thou stand'st for judgment
on thine own,
The deed shall shine beside thee as an
angel.

LOUIS [*much affected*]. Go, go, to
Baradas: and annul thy marriage,
And —

JULIE [*anxiously, and watching his
countenance*]. Be his bride!

LOUIS. A form, a mere decorum.
Thou know'st I love thee.

JULIE. O thou sea of shame,
And not one star.

[*The KING goes up the stage and
passes through the suite of
rooms at the side in evident
emotion*]

BARADAS. Well, thy election, Julie;
This hand — his grave!

JULIE. His grave! and I —

BARADAS. Can save him.
Swear to be mine.

JULIE. That were a bitterer death!
Avaunt, thou tempter! I did ask his
life

A boon, and not the barter of dishonour.
The heart can break, and scorn you:
wreak your malice;

Adrien and I will leave you this sad
earth,

And pass together hand in hand to
Heaven!

BARADAS. You have decided. [*With-
draws to the side scene for a moment
and returns*] Listen to me, Lady;
I am no base intriguer. I adored thee
From the first glance of those inspiring
eyes;

With thee entwined ambition, hope, the
future.

I will not lose thee! I can place thee
nearest —

Ay, to the throne — nay, on the throne,
perchance;

My star is at its zenith. Look upon
me;

Hast thou decided?

JULIE. No, no; you can see
How weak I am, be human, Sir — one
moment.

BARADAS. [*Stamping his foot. DE
MAUPRAT appears at the side of the
Stage guarded*]

Behold thy husband! — Shall he pass
to death,

And know thou could'st have saved him?

JULIE. Adrien, speak!
But say you wish to *live*! — if not your
wife,

Your slave, — do with me as you will
DE MAUPRAT. Once more! —

Why, this is mercy, Count! Oh, thin
my Julie,

Life, at the best, is short, — but lov
immortal!

BARADAS [*taking JULIE's hand*]. A
loveliest —

JULIE. Go, that touch has made
iron.

We have decided — death!

BARADAS. [*To DE MAUPRAT*] Now
say to whom

Thou gavest the packet, and thou y
shalt live.

DE MAUPRAT. I'll tell thee nothing

BARADAS. Hark, — the rack!

DE MAUPRAT. Thy penance
For ever, wretch! — What rack is lik
the conscience?

JULIE. I shall be with thee soon.

BARADAS [*giving the writ to th
OFFICER*]. Hence, to the headsm

[*The doors are thrown open. Th*

HUSSIER announces "*His Em
nence the Cardinal Duke o
Richelieu*"]

[*Enter RICHELIEU, attended by GENTLE
MEN, PAGES, etc., pale, feeble, an
leaning on JOSEPH, followed
SECRETARIES OF STATE, attende
by three SUB-SECRETARIES wi
papers, etc.*]

JULIE [*rushing to RICHELIEU*]. Yo
live — you live — and Adrien sha
not die!

RICHELIEU. Not if an old man
prayers, himself near death,

Can aught avail thee, daughter! Coun
you now

Hold what I held on earth: — on
boon, my Lord,

This soldier's life.

BARADAS. The stake — my head
— you said it.

I cannot lose one trick. Remove you
prisoner.

JULIE. No! — No! —

[*Enter LOUIS from the rooms beyond*]

RICHELIEU. [*To OFFICER*] Stay
Sir, one moment. My good Liege

Your worn-out servant, willing, Sir,
to spare you

Some pain of conscience, would fore
stall your wishes.

I do resign my office.

DE MAUPRAT. You?

JULIE. All's over!

RICHELIEU. My end draws near. These sad ones, Sire, I love them, not ask his life; but suffer justice halt, until I can dismiss his soul, aged with an old man's blessing.

LOUIS. Surely!

BARADAS. Sire —

LOUIS. Silence — small favour to a dying servant.

RICHELIEU. You would consign your armies to the baton

our most honour'd brother. Sire, to be it!

minister, the Count de Baradas; most sagacious choice! — Your Secretaries

ate attend me, Sire, to render up edgers of a realm. — I do beseech you,

these noble gentlemen to learn nature of the glorious task that awaits them,

in my presence.

LOUIS. You say well, my Lord.

[To SECRETARIES as he seats himself]. Approach, Sirs.

RICHELIEU. I — I — faint! — air — air.

[JOSEPH and a GENTLEMAN assist him to a sofa, placed beneath a window]

Thank you —

near, my children.

BARADAS. He's too weak to question, scarce to speak; all's safe.

THE THIRD. — *Manent* RICHELIEU, MAUPRAT and JULIE, the last kneeling beside the CARDINAL; the OFFICER OF THE GUARD behind MAUPRAT. JOSEPH near RICHELIEU, watching the KING. LOUIS. BARADAS at the back of the KING's chair, anxious and disturbed. ORLEANS at a greater distance, careless and triumphant. The SECRETARIES. As each SECRETARY advances in his turn, he takes the portfolios from the SUB-SECRETARIES.

FIRST SECRETARY. The affairs of Portugal,

urgent, Sire — One short month since the Duke

anza was a rebel.

LOUIS. And is still!

FIRST SECRETARY. No, Sire, he has succeeded! He is now

and King of Portugal — craves instant succour

Against the arms of Spain.

LOUIS. We will not grant it Against his lawful King. Eh, Count?

BARADAS. No, Sire.

FIRST SECRETARY. But Spain's your deadliest foe; whatever

Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal

Would send the succours; — [solemnly] — balance, Sire, of Europe!

LOUIS. The Cardinal! — balance!

— We'll consider — Eh, Count?

BARADAS. Yes, Sire; — fall back.

FIRST SECRETARY. But —

BARADAS. Oh, fall back, Sir!

JOSEPH. Humph!

SECOND SECRETARY. The affairs of England, Sire, most urgent; Charles The First has lost a battle that decides One half his realm — craves moneys, Sire, and succour.

LOUIS. He shall have both. — Eh, Baradas?

BARADAS. Yes, Sire.

(Oh, that despatch! — my veins are fire!)

RICHELIEU [*feebly, but with great distinctness*]. My Liege —

Forgive me — Charles' cause is lost. A man,

Named Cromwell, risen, — a great man! — your succour

Would fail — your loans be squander'd! Pause — reflect.

LOUIS. Reflect — Eh, Baradas?

BARADAS. Reflect, Sire.

JOSEPH. Humph!

LOUIS [*aside*]. I half repent! No successor to Richelieu!

Round me thrones totter! dynasties dissolve!

The soil he guards alone escapes the earthquake!

JOSEPH. Our star not yet eclipsed! — you mark the King?

Oh! had we the despatch!

RICHELIEU. Ah! Joseph! Child — Would I could help thee.

[Enter GENTLEMAN, whispers JOSEPH, they exeunt hastily]

BARADAS. [To SECRETARY] Sir, fall back!

SECOND SECRETARY. But —

BARADAS. Pshaw, Sir!

THIRD SECRETARY [*mysteriously*]. The secret correspondence, Sire, most urgent —

Accounts of spies — deserters — heretics —

Assassins — poisoners — schemes
against yourself!

LOUIS. *Myself!* — most urgent!

[*Looking on the documents*]

[*Re-enter JOSEPH with FRANÇOIS, whose pourpoint is streaked with blood. FRANÇOIS passes behind the CARDINAL's attendants, and sheltered by them from the sight of BARADAS, etc., falls at RICHELIEU's feet*]

FRANÇOIS. O! my Lord!

RICHELIEU. Thou art bleeding!

FRANÇOIS. A scratch — I have not fail'd! [*Gives the packet*]

RICHELIEU. Hush!

[*Looking at the contents*]

THIRD SECRETARY. [*To KING*] Sire, the Spaniards

Have reinforced their army on the frontiers.

The Duc de Bouillon —

RICHELIEU. Hold! In this department —

A paper — here, Sire — read yourself — then take

The Count's advice in 't.

[*Enter DE BERINGHEN hastily, and draws aside BARADAS*]

[*RICHELIEU, to SECRETARY, giving an open parchment*]

BARADAS [*bursting from DE BERINGHEN*]. What! and reft it from thee!

Ha! — hold!

JOSEPH. Fall back, son, — it is your turn now!

BARADAS. Death! — the Despatch!

LOUIS [*reading*]. To Bouillon — and sign'd Orleans! —

Baradas, too! — league with our foes of Spain! —

Lead our Italian armies — what! to Paris! —

Capture the King — my health require repose —

Make me subscribe my proper abdication —

Orleans, my brother, Regent! — Saints of Heaven!

These are the men I loved!

[*BARADAS draws, — attempts to rush out, — is arrested. ORLEANS, endeavouring to escape more quickly, meets JOSEPH's eye and stops short. RICHELIEU falls back*]

JOSEPH. See to the Cardinal.

BARADAS. He's dying! — and I yet shall dupe the King.

LOUIS [*rushing to RICHELIEU*]. Richelieu! — Lord Cardinal! — 'tis resign!

Reign thou!

JOSEPH. Alas! too late! — faints!

LOUIS. Reign, Richelieu!

RICHELIEU [*feebly*]. With absolute power?

LOUIS. Most absolute! Oh, live! If not for me — for France!

RICHELIEU. FRANCE!

LOUIS. Ah! this treason!

The army — Orleans — Bouillon — Heavens! — the Spaniard!

Where will they be next week?

RICHELIEU [*starting up*]. There, — my feet!

[*TO FIRST and SECOND SECRETARIES*]

Ere the clock strike! —

The Envoys have their answer!

[*To THIRD SECRETARY, with a ring*]

This to De Chavigny — he knows the rest —

No need of parchment here — he must not halt

For sleep — for food — In my name — MINE — he will

Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head Of his army! Ho! there, Count

Baradas.

Thou hast lost the stake. — Away with him!

[*As the GUARDS open the folding doors, a view of the ante-room beyond, lined with COURTIER*
BARADAS passes thro' the line

Ha! — ha! —

[*Snatching DE MAUPRAT's death-warrant from the OFFICER*]

See here, De Mauprat's death-warrant! Julie! —

Parchment for battledores! — Embrace your husband!

At last the old man blesses you!

JULIE. Oh, joy!

You are saved, you live — I hold you in these arms!

DE MAUPRAT. Never to part —

JULIE. No — never, Adrien — never!

LOUIS [*peevishly*]. One moment make a startling cure, Lord Cardinal.

RICHELIEU. Ay, Sire; for in one moment there did pass

Into this wither'd frame the might of France! —

My own dear France. — I have thee yet — I have saved thee!

I clasp thee still! it was thy voice that call'd me

from the tomb! What mistress
ke our country?

UIS. For Mauprat's pardon —
vell! But Julie, — Richelieu,
e me one thing to love!

HELIEU. A subject's luxury!
if you must love something, Sire
— love me!

UIS [smiling in spite of himself]
air proxy for a fresh young
Demoiselle!

HELIEU. Your heart speaks for
my clients: — Kneel, my children —
thank your King —

IE. Ah, tears like these, my
iege,
ews that mount to Heaven.

UIS. Rise — rise — be happy!
[Retires]

[RICHELIEU beckons to DE BER-
INGHEN]

BERINGHEN [falteringly]. My
ord — you are — most — happily
ecover'd.

HELIEU. But you are pale, dear
eringhen: — this air
not your delicate frame — I long
ave thought so:

not another night in Paris: —
o, —
se your precious life may be in
anger.

France, dear Beringhen!

BERINGHEN. I shall have time,
than I ask'd for, — to discuss the
âté.

HELIEU. [To ORLEANS] For you,
epentance — absence, and con-
ession!

FRANÇOIS] Never say fail again.
rave Boy!

[To JOSEPH] He'll be —
A Bishop first.

JOSEPH. Ah, Cardinal —
RICHELIEU. Ah, Joseph!

[To LOUIS, as DE MAUPRAT and
JULIE converse apart]

See, my Liege — see thro' plots and
counterplots —

Thro' gain and loss — thro' glory and
disgrace —

Along the plains, where passionate
Discord rears

Eternal Babel — still the holy stream
Of human happiness glides on!

LOUIS. And must we
Thank for that also — our prime min-
ister?

RICHELIEU. No — let us own it: —
there is ONE above

Sways the harmonious mystery of the
world

Ev'n better than prime ministers.

Alas!

Our glories float between the earth and
heaven

Like clouds that seem pavilions of the
sun,

And are the playthings of the casual
wind;

Still, like the cloud which drops on
unseen crags

The dew the wild flower feeds on, our
ambition

May from its airy height drop gladness
down

On unsuspected virtue; — and the
flower

May bless the cloud when it hath
pass'd away!

THE END

LONDON ASSURANCE

A COMEDY

(1841)

BY DION BOUCICAULT

DION BOUCICAULT

(1822-1890)

It was Aubrey Boucicault who said, "I generally have to start at the beginning of the alphabet when I attempt to recall all the plays my father wrote." Yet, though the number was over four hundred, a few of them, "London Assurance", "The Colleen Bawn", and "The Shaughraun" being the most typical, are sufficient to present the special features characterizing the genial Irishman's work. Boucicault was destined to influence many future melodramatists. But his comedy of manners was, all told, only a prosaic imitation of what was most sprightly and original in Goldsmith and Sheridan.

Because Boucicault was so intimately associated with theatrical life, his genius was narrowed through his facility in stagecraft, which made him strain character and situation. Edgar Allan Poe, in his estimate of Mrs. Mowatt, the actress, and author of the American comedy, "Fashion", referred to "that despicable mass of literary 'London Assurance.'" However sweeping this opinion may be, it warns us to approach the Boucicault drama from across the footlights and not at closer quarters.

The playwright was born at Dublin, December 26, 1822, and was christened Sylvius Lardner Boucicault, a compliment to the great philologist, Dr. Lardner, mentioned by Thackeray in the "Yellowplush Papers." On his father's side he inherited a French strain, seen in the gradual evolution of his name from *Bosquet* to *Siquot*, to *Bourcicault*, with the later dropping of the *r*. It was on his mother's side that Boucicault received his greatest heritage. She was a Miss Darley, sister of the essayist and dramatist, George Darley, as well as sister of the Reverend Charles Darley, author of "Plighted Troth."

Young Boucicault had reached the age of nineteen when he wrote his first play. Early accounts of his education are conflicting, it being believed in one quarter that he was placed with Stephenson, the inventor of the steam locomotive, and that he had the honour of riding on the first steam engine that ran between Liverpool and Manchester. There is another theory that he attended London University, living among his friends, Charles Lamb Kenney, a namesake of *Elia*. Pascoe says that Dublin was his school centre.

Whatever that may be, he joined a dramatic company in 1838, and had attained some small reputation as an actor when he met success with the first of his dramas, "London Assurance", given its première at Covent Garden, on March 4, 1841. The name adopted for the comedy was a hasty substitute; for, just before the curtain rose, the play was known as "Out of Town."

It will not bear analysis as a literary production [the author wrote in a preface to the second edition of the printed play]. In fact, my sole object is to

throw together a few scenes of a dramatic nature, and therefore I studied the stage rather than the moral effect. I attempted to instil a pungency into the dialogue, and to procure vivid tones by a strong antithesis of character. The moral which I intended to convey is expressed in the last speech of the comedy, but as I wrote "currente calamo" I have doubtless through the play strayed far wide of my original intent.

"Barefaced assurance is the vulgar substitute for gentlemanly ease," said Sir Harcourt Courtley. ". . . The title of gentleman is the only one out of a monarch's gift, yet within the reach of every peasant." This is the substance of that last speech.

As Boucicault said, the "motive" was not sufficiently emphasized, but the stage pictures were effective and the characters afforded ample scope for good acting.

Boucicault's own account of his début as a dramatist, coloured with the tinge of pleasant romance, is to be found in the *North American Review*, January-June, 1881. He has told in a minute way his feelings as he took the play to Charles Mathey, who first read it as a one-act piece. The whole drama was cut after a conventional model, of which "The School for Scandal" is a most vivid example. Boucicault was too young to do aught but reflect what he either had heard or had read. For such a young man, the play exhibited remarkable efficiency and surety in dialogue besides possessing theatrical richness. Once, Boucicault spoke of wit as a man possessing a soft and genial quality — of its being more admirable than endearment and he condemned its application as heartless. For this very reason, he stigmatized "The School for Scandal" as the most cold-blooded drama on the stage.

But in writing "London Assurance", it cannot be denied that Boucicault's eye was on this more polished comedy of the eighteenth century. Nor, after all, was there much originality in "London Assurance", for, in other forms, its plot had been used before, and John Brougham came forward claiming his share, not only in the conception of the part of *Dazzle*, but in the construction of the entire piece. Lester Wallack, the American actor, came to the rescue of Brougham in the dispute which followed. But the latter was not over-anxious to receive his just desert whatever they might have been, his friends being the only ones who persisted in pushing the dispute. Finally, the two authors went to an attorney's office in London and there Brougham prepared a statement as to his exact share in the work, and forthwith signed away all further claims on receipt of a very substantial check from Boucicault. The legal dispute left no marked ill-feeling, since Brougham afterwards appeared in many of the Boucicault dramas. Among them, he played "The Shaughraun." The text for this Irish comedy is included in the third volume of the present author's "Representative Plays by American Dramatists."

Such a misunderstanding at the outset of the dramatist's career is significant. It was to be repeated many times during the years to come. In fact, Charles Reade once wrote:

Like Shakespeare and Molière, the beggar [meaning Boucicault] steals everything he can lay his hands on; but he does it so deftly, so cleverly, that I can't help condoning the theft. He picks up a pebble by the shore and polishes it into a jewel. Occasionally, too, he writes divine lines, and knows more about the grammar of the stage than all the rest of them [the dramatists] put together.

ster Wallack was at the theatre during the first production of "London Uncensored." The managers of Covent Garden had done their utmost to mount the piece according to the latest improvements in stage art. The audience saw there the rare examples of the boxed-in scene, where all the appointments were elaborate and realistic. The stage manager was well-nigh stunned when the young dramatist asked him to use a real carpet in one of the settings. Herein may be seen another of Boucicault's claims to influence; more than any other playwright of his day, he depended largely upon realistic accessory for certain effects. He was in "The Octoroon" and water in "The Colleen Bawn" — those external elements affording many outlets for thrilling situations. The Boucicault drama was essentially external.

He studied his audiences carefully, noting in what way they responded to his plays — for he spent many hours preparing novel surprises.

He wrote many plays in rapid succession. A remarkable fact about his career was that, no matter whether good or bad, original or otherwise, the Boucicault play was eagerly sought by the theatre because it was framed for the theatre. As the dramatist wrote, just so fast were his manuscripts given to companies for rehearsal. Boucicault himself declared that "he was a lucky bag out of which managers drew fortunes and some drew blanks."

He usually grows older and wiser with the years. But it is typical of Boucicault that he blossomed all of a sudden, that he slipped, at an early age, into what we call intellectual maturity he was to possess, and that he used over and over again the same tricks and sentiments of an external nature familiar to earlier Victorian dramatists. He was, as some of his friends termed him, a gay, "semi-fashionable, semi-romantic" fellow, impulsive, nervous, a rapid worker, and as ready to flare into a passion as he was to exhibit his abundant Irish wit and humour. No man of his time was more given to excessive use of the blarney stone.

I knew [him], [writes Clement Scott], in the "Colleen Bawn" days at the Lyceum, when he had a magnificent mansion and grounds at Old Brompton. . . . I knew him in the days of "The Shaughraun" at the same theatre, and I met him constantly at the tables of Edmund Yates [*et als.*], and I was also frequent guest at his own table when he lived, as he ever did, money or no money, credit or no credit, "en prince" at his flat. . . . Dion was a born raconteur, a "gourmand" and "gourmet", and certainly one of the most brilliant conversationalists it has ever been my happy fortune to meet.

John Coleman, the actor and writer, used to see Boucicault at Charles Reade's, for years, when the dramatist had become much older, yet with his Irish nature unchanged. It was characteristic of Boucicault that he could sing "The Song of the Green" with as much spirit at sixty as he could at twenty. Coleman says:

This distinguished actor and author had (so he himself told me) left Ireland under a cloud, but had "cast his nighted colour off" in America, and returned to triumph. When we first met he was living "en grand seigneur" in the famous mansion at Kensington Gore, which had formerly been the home of the Countess of Blessington. He was then making a fortune one moment and spending it the next. . . .

His accomplishments were many and varied. He knew something about

everything, and what he didn't know about the popular drama (which to some extent he incarnated in himself) wasn't worth knowing. Although no longer young, his mind was alert as a boy's, and I can well believe what Charles Mathews, Walter Lacey, and John Brougham often told me — that in his juvenalia he was the most fascinating young scapegrace that ever baffled or bamboozled a bailiff.

It is not necessary to go into an account of the prolific career of Dion Boucicault. One may find it outlined in the present writer's "Famous Actor Families in America" and in Townsend Walsh's "Life of Boucicault", written for the Dunlap Society.

He was an actor of tremendous versatility, and "created" the chief rôles in many of his own plays. He fell easily into the habit of depending on French sources, and he was likewise one among many dramatists who profited by adapting plays from the novels of Dickens. He often entered the field as a dramatic innovator, and his work he did on the version of "Rip Van Winkle", which Joseph Jefferson later brought to such success, helped to facilitate its stage production. True to his readiness for any kind of available material, he converted Scott's "The Heart of Midlothian" and Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" into dramas, and collaborated with Charles Reade in preparing "Foul Play" from the novel for stage presentation. All this dramatic activity showed too much facility, and the reader who will examine his essay on the art of dramatic composition will note the philosophy of style which influenced his literary endeavours. During his long career, he often served as a reader of plays for the current theatre, and his approach toward a manuscript is clearly indicated in what he once said respecting the laws of dramaturgy:

The essence of a rule is its necessity: it must be reasonable and always in the right. The unities of time and place do not seem to be reasonable and have been violated with impunity, therefore are not always in the right. The liberty of imagination should not be sacrificed to arbitrary restrictions and traditions that lead to dulness and formality. Art is not a church; it is the philosophy of pleasure.

The summary of Boucicault's life is a peculiar one; impulsive yet thoughtful, quick to see effects, but lacking in originality, except that originality which had to do with practical arrangement; he was extravagant and headstrong, yet kind hearted. He had a fund of knowledge which his dramatic instinct enslaved for stage use. He was quick to lay hold of the events of the moment and to incorporate them in his dramas. Note "The Relief of Lucknow" and "The Octoroon." He was closely identified with the development of the drama in America as he was with the development of the Victorian drama in England. As an Irishman, he was interested in the political welfare of his country, and his public utterances, his occasional pamphlets, and the references to Irish condition made in his dramas were many.

Boucicault was rapid in his work, and he always held that this rapidity was due to the fact that the dramatic copyright law did not afford the author proper protection; he had to be quick in order to get ahead of his competitors. It was in 1856 that the American Congress decided the author had some rights to his printed productions. In France, Boucicault had seen dramatists prosper under the royal system. For years he too fought for the same opportunity, and only succeeded finally, by openly defying the Dramatic Authors' Society in England and t

atic managers of the United States. This he proceeded to do, around 1860, founding forth more than one company in his own plays, taking a proper commission for himself from the proceeds of each performance. By these travelling companies of his, he was partly instrumental in hastening the decline of the old System. In 1866, he preached his ideas to the French, who greeted them favorably, and, by 1872, the United States had likewise accepted them. The royalty system was insisted upon by Boucicault after dire experience. In 1879, he said:

To the commercial manager we owe the introduction of the burlesque, *va-bouffe*, and the reign of buffoonery. We owe to him also the deluge of French plays that set in with 1842, and swamped the English drama of that period. For examples: the usual price received by Sheridan Knowles, Taylor, and Talfourd at the time for their plays was £500. I was a beginner in 1841, and received for my comedy, "London Assurance", £300. For that amount the manager bought the privilege of playing the work for his season. Three years later I offered a new play to a principal London theatre. The manager offered me £100 for it. In reply to my objection to the smallness of the sum, he remarked: "I can go to Paris and select a first-class comedy; having seen it performed, I feel certain of its effect. To get this comedy translated will cost me £25. Why should I give you £300 or £500 for your comedy, the success of which I cannot feel so assured?" The argument was unanswerable, and the result inevitable. I sold a work for £100 that took me six months' hard work to compose, and accepted a commission to translate three French plays at £50 apiece. This work afforded me child's play for a fortnight. As the English dramatist was obliged either to relinquish the stage altogether or to become a French copyist.

Boucicault has left his impress upon the development of drama, and his name is to be reckoned with. Few of his plays, however, bear the permanent elements which will preserve them for the next century. He was original, if by that word one means entertaining; otherwise, he was clever — a cleverness based upon his gift of dialogue, however imitative, and his knowledge of stagecraft. As one critic

He gave his age what it wanted. . . . He was a dramaturgical material. . . . The Boucicault drama is dead; any discussion of it is in the nature of an autopsy. Its most notable quality was its gayety — its fine animal spirits. It was merry and clean.

Boucicault did much to create for the stage a stereotyped figure of the Irishman. Small wonder it is that his name should spell anathema to the new generation of Irish playwrights. W. B. Yeats claims that the Abbey Theatre was firmly founded on a determination to root out the popular conception of the Irishman, sentimentally and so ignobly presented in "The Colleen Bawn", "The Shaugh-Bunch", and "Arrah-na-Pogue."

"London Assurance" has been selected for inclusion in the present collection, because it is typical of Boucicault at his maturest, but because it reflects the adaptation of English comedy to the needs of a very trivial theatrical atmosphere. One of the plays presenting infinite possibilities from the standpoint of acting.

It has the semblance of manners, even as "The School for Scandal" has the essential spirit of manners. *Grace Harkaway* may be trivial, but still she is picturesque. *Lady Gay Spanker*, with none of the deeper qualities of *Lady Algy*, in R. C. Carton's later comedy, "Lord and Lady Algy", possesses vivid and attractive possibilities. Certainly, in the drawing of *Mawley*, Mr. Carton must have had in mind the form of the picture of *Mr. Spanker*. The play has received no better revival than that given to it by the Bancrofts, in 1877, when it was reshaped so as to make it less out of fashion. In 1847, Charles Dickens wrote:

Shall I ever forget Vestris in "London Assurance" [Madame Vestris was the original *Grace Harkaway*] bursting out with certain praises (they always elicited three rounds) — of a country morning, I think it was? The atrocity was perpetrated, I remember, on a lawn before a villa. It was led up to by flower-pots. The thing was as like any honest sympathy, or honest Englishness, as the rose-pink on a sweep's face on May Day is to a beautiful complexion; but Harley (he was the "creator" of *Mark Meddle*) generally appeared touched to the soul, and a man in the pit always cried out, "Beau-ti-ful."

LONDON ASSURANCE
A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

BY DION L. BOURCICAULT

TO
 CHARLES KEMBLE
 THIS COMEDY
 (WITH HIS KIND PERMISSION)
 IS DEDICATED
 BY HIS FERVENT ADMIRER AND HUMBLE SERVANT
 DION. L. BOURCICAULT

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<i>Covent Garden, 1841</i>	<i>Park, 1841</i>
SIR HARCOURT COURTLY	Mr. W. Farren	Mr. Placide
MAX HARKAWAY	Mr. Bartley	Mr. Fisher
CHARLES COURTLY	Mr. Anderson	Mr. Wheatl
MR. SPANKER	Mr. Keeley	Mr. William
DAZZLE	Mr. C. Mathews	Mr. Browne
MARK MEDDLE	Mr. Harley	Mr. Latham
COOL (Valet)	Mr. Brindal	Mr. Andrew
SIMPSON (Butler)	Mr. Honner	Mr. King
MARTIN	Mr. Ayliffe	Mr. Howard
LADY GAY SPANKER	Mrs. Nisbett	Miss Cushm
GRACE HARKAWAY	Madame Vestris	Miss Claren
PERT	Mrs. Humby	Mrs. Vernon

The Scene lies in London and Gloucestershire in 1841.

Time — Three days.

First produced at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, on March 4, 1841; and in the United States, at the Park Theatre, New York, October 11, 1841.

LONDON ASSURANCE

ACT I

SCENE FIRST. — *An Ante-Room in Sir Harcourt Courtly's House in Belgrave Square.*

[*Enter COOL*]

COOL. Half-past nine, and Mr. Charles has not yet returned. I am in a fever of dread. If his father happen to be earlier than usual on any morning, it is sure to ask first for Mr. Charles. The deluded old gentleman — he little thinks how he is deceived.

[*Enter MARTIN, lazily*]

MARTIN. Well, Martin, he has not come home yet! COOL. No; and I have not had a wink of sleep all night — I cannot stand any longer; I shall give warning. This is the fifth night Mr. Courtly has remained out, and I'm obliged to stand the hall window to watch for him.

COOL. You know, if Sir Harcourt were aware that we connived at his son's irregularities, we should all be disgraced.

MARTIN. I have used up all my common excuses on his duns. — "Call in", "Not at home", and "Send it on to you", won't serve any more; Mr. Crust, the wine merchant, swears he will be paid.

COOL. So they all say. Why, he has arrested out against him already. I have seen the fellows watching the door [Loud knock and ring heard] — There they are, just in time — quick, Martin, for I expect Sir William's bell every moment — [Bell rings] — and there it is. [Exit MARTIN, slowly] Thank heaven! I will return to college to-morrow, and my heavy responsibility will be taken from my shoulders. A valet is as difficult to get to fill properly as that of prime minister. [Exit]

YOUNG COURTLY. [Without] Hollo!

DAZZLE. [Without] Steady!

[*Enter YOUNG COURTLY and DAZZLE*]

YOUNG COURTLY. Hollo-o-o!

DAZZLE. Hush! what are you about, howling like a Hottentot. Sit down there, and thank heaven you are in Belgrave Square, instead of Bow Street.

YOUNG COURTLY. D—n — damn Bow Street.

DAZZLE. Oh, with all my heart! — you have not seen as much of it as I have.

YOUNG COURTLY. I say — let me see — what was I going to say? — oh, look here — [*Pulls out a large assortment of bell-pulls, knockers, etc., from his pocket*] There! dam'me! I'll puzzle the two-penny postmen, — I'll deprive them of their right of disturbing the neighbourhood. That black lion's head did belong to old Vampire, the money-lender; this bell-pull to Miss Stitch, the milliner.

DAZZLE. And this brass griffin —

YOUNG COURTLY. That! oh, let me see — I think — I twisted that off our own hall-door as I came in, while you were paying the cab.

DAZZLE. What shall I do with them?

YOUNG COURTLY. Pack 'em in a small hamper, and send 'em to the sitting magistrate with my father's compliments; in the mean time, come into my room, and I'll astonish you with some Burgundy.

[*Re-enter COOL*]

COOL. Mr. Charles —

YOUNG COURTLY. Out! out! not at home to any one.

COOL. And drunk —

YOUNG COURTLY. As a lord.

COOL. If Sir Harcourt knew this, he would go mad, he would discharge me.

YOUNG COURTLY. You flatter yourself: that would be no proof of his insanity. — [*To DAZZLE*] This is Cool,

sir, Mr. Cool; he is the best liar in London — there is a pungency about his invention, and an originality in his equivocation, that is perfectly refreshing.

COOL. [*Aside*] Why, Mr. Charles, where did you pick him up?

YOUNG COURTLY. You mistake, he picked me up. [*Bell rings*]

COOL. Here comes Sir Harcourt — pray do not let him see you in this state.

YOUNG COURTLY. State! what do you mean? I am in a beautiful state.

COOL. I should lose my character.

YOUNG COURTLY. That would be a fortunate epoch in your life, Cool.

COOL. Your father would discharge me.

YOUNG COURTLY. Cool, my dad is an old ass.

COOL. Retire to your own room, for heaven's sake, Mr. Charles.

YOUNG COURTLY. I'll do so for my own sake. [*To DAZZLE*] I say, old fellow, [*staggering*] just hold the door steady while I go in.

DAZZLE. This way. Now, then! — take care! [*Helps him into the room*]

[*Enter SIR HARCOURT COURTLY in an elegant dressing-gown, and Greek scull-cap and tassels, etc.*]

SIR HARCOURT. Cool, is breakfast ready?

COOL. Quite ready, Sir Harcourt.

SIR HARCOURT. Apropos. I omitted to mention that I expect Squire Harkaway to join us this morning, and you must prepare for my departure to Oak Hall immediately.

COOL. Leave town in the middle of the season, Sir Harcourt? So unprecedented a proceeding!

SIR HARCOURT. It is! I confess it: there is but one power could effect such a miracle — that is divinity.

COOL. How!

SIR HARCOURT. In female form, of course. Cool, I am about to present society with a second Lady Courtly; young — blushing eighteen; — lovely! I have her portrait; rich! I have her banker's account; — an heiress, and a Venus!

COOL. Lady Courtly could be none other.

SIR HARCOURT. Ha! ha! Cool, your manners are above your station. — Apropos, I shall find no further use for my brocade dressing-gown.

COOL. I thank you, Sir Harcourt; might I ask who the fortunate lady is?

SIR HARCOURT. Certainly: I Grace Harkaway, the niece of my friend, Max.

COOL. Have you never seen the lady, sir?

SIR HARCOURT. Never — that yes — eight years ago. Having been, as you know, on the continent for last seven years, I have not had opportunity of paying my devotion. Our connexion and betrothal was an extraordinary one. Her father's estates were contiguous to mine; — being penurious, miserly, ugly old scoundrel, he made a market of my indiscretion and supplied my extravagance with large sums of money on mortgages, my great desire being to unite the properties. About seven years ago he died — leaving Grace, a girl, to the guardianship of her uncle, with full will: — if, on attaining the age of nineteen, she would consent to marry me, I should receive those deeds, and all his property, as her dowry. He refused to comply with this condition; they should revert to my heir-presumptive or apparent. — She consents.

COOL. Who would not?

SIR HARCOURT. I consent to receive her 15,000*l.* a year.

COOL. [*Aside*] Who would not?

SIR HARCOURT. So prepare, prepare; — but where is my boy, who is Charles?

COOL. Why — oh, he is gone out to the walk.

SIR HARCOURT. Poor child! A perfect child in heart — a sober, practical mind — the simplicity and verdure of boyhood, kept fresh and unsullied by any contact with society. Tell me, Cool, at what time was he in bed last night?

COOL. Half-past nine, Sir Harcourt.

SIR HARCOURT. Half-past nine! Beautiful! What an original! Reposing in cherub slumbers, while around him teems with drinking debauchery! Primitive sweetness of nature! No pilot-coated, bear-skin bawling!

COOL. Oh, Sir Harcourt!

SIR HARCOURT. No cigar-smoking —

COOL. Faints at the smell of one.

SIR HARCOURT. No brandy water bibbing.

COOL. Doesn't know the taste of anything stronger than barley-water.

SIR HARCOURT. No night parading — Cool. Never heard the clock strike ve, except at noon.

SIR HARCOURT. In fact, he is my son, became a gentleman by right of rnity. He inherited my manners.

[Enter MARTIN]

MARTIN. Mr. Harkaway!

[Enter MAX HARKAWAY]

MAX. Squire Harkaway, fellow, or Harkaway, another time. [MARTIN bows, and exit] Ah! Ha! Sir court, I'm devilish glad to see you! me your fist. Dang it, but I'm to see ye! Let me see: six — n years, or more, since we have met. y quickly they have flown!

SIR HARCOURT [throwing off his ed manner]. Max, Max! Give me hand, old boy. — [Aside] Ah! he ad to see me: there is no fawning ence about that squeeze. Cool, you retire. [Exit COOL]

MAX. Why, you are looking quite

SIR HARCOURT. Ah! ah! rosy! Am florid?

MAX. Not a bit; not a bit.

SIR HARCOURT. I thought so. — [Exit] Cool said I had put too much

MAX. How comes it, Courtly, that manage to retain your youth? See, as grey as an old badger, or a wild bit; while you are — are as black y young rook. I say, whose head y your hair, eh?

SIR HARCOURT. Permit me to remark all the beauties of my person are of e manufacture. Why should you surprised at my youth? I have eely thrown off the giddiness of a y boy — elasticity of limb — buoy y of soul! Remark this position — [He bows himself into an attitude] I held attitude for ten minutes at Lady 's last reunion, at the express desire e of our first sculptors, while he was ing a sketch of me for the Apollo.

MAX. [Aside] Making a butt of for their gibes.

SIR HARCOURT. Lady Sarah Sarcasm ed up, and, pointing to my face, ulated, "Good gracious! Does not Harcourt remind you of the counce of Ajax, in the Pompeian por- ture?"

MAX. Ajax! — humbug.

SIR HARCOURT. You are complimen- tary.

MAX. I'm a plain man, and always speak my mind. What's in a face or figure? Does a Grecian nose entail a good temper? Does a waspish waist indicate a good heart? Or, do oily perfumed locks necessarily thatch a well-furnished brain?

SIR HARCOURT. It's an undeniable fact, — plain people always praise the beauties of the mind.

MAX. Excuse the insinuation; I had thought the first Lady Courtly had surfeited you with beauty.

SIR HARCOURT. No; she lived four- teen months with me, and then eloped with an intimate friend. Etiquette compelled me to challenge the seducer; so I received satisfaction — and a bullet in my shoulder at the same time. How- ever, I had the consolation of knowing that he was the handsomest man of the age. She did not insult me, by running away with a d—d ill-looking scoundrel.

MAX. That, certainly, was flattering.

SIR HARCOURT. I felt so, as I pocketed the ten thousand pounds damages.

MAX. That must have been a great balm to your sore honour.

SIR HARCOURT. It was — Max, my honour would have died without it; for on that year the wrong horse won the Derby — by some mistake. It was one of the luckiest chances — a thing that does not happen twice in a man's life — the opportunity of getting rid of his wife and his debts at the same time.

MAX. Tell the truth, Courtly! Did you not feel a little frayed in your delicacy — your honour, now? Eh?

SIR HARCOURT. Not a whit. Why should I? I married money, and I received it — virgin gold! My delicacy and honour had nothing to do with hers. The world pities the bereaved husband, when it should congratulate. No: the affair made a sensation, and I was the object. Besides, it is vulgar to make a parade of one's feelings, how- ever acute they may be: impenetrability of countenance is the sure sign of your highly-bred man of fashion.

MAX. So, a man must, therefore, lose his wife and his money with a smile, — in fact, every thing he possesses but his temper.

SIR HARCOURT. Exactly, — and greet ruin with *vive la bagatelle!* For example, — your modish beauty never

discomposes the shape of her features with convulsive laughter. A smile rewards the *bon mot*, and also shows the whiteness of her teeth. She never weeps impromptu — tears might destroy the economy of her cheek. Scenes are vulgar, — hysterics obsolete; she exhibits a calm, placid, impenetrable lake, whose surface is reflexion, but of unfathomable depth, — a statue, whose life is hypothetical, and not a *prima facie* fact.

MAX. Well, give me the girl that will fly at your eyes in an argument, and stick to her point like a fox to his own tail.

SIR HARCOURT. But etiquette! Max, — remember etiquette!

MAX. Damn etiquette! I have seen a man who thought it sacrilege to eat fish with a knife, that would not scruple to rise up and rob his brother of his birth-right in a gambling-house. Your thorough-bred, well-blooded heart will seldom kick over the traces of good feeling. That's my opinion, and I don't care who knows it.

SIR HARCOURT. Pardon me, — etiquette is the pulse of society, by regulating which the body politic is retained in health. I consider myself one of the faculty in the art.

MAX. Well, well; you are a living libel upon common sense, for you are old enough to know better.

SIR HARCOURT. Old enough! What do you mean? Old! I still retain all my little juvenile indiscretions, which your niece's beauties must teach me to discard. I have not sown my wild oats yet.

MAX. Time you did, at sixty-three.

SIR HARCOURT. Sixty-three! Good God! — forty, 'pon my life! forty, next March.

MAX. Why, you are older than I am.

SIR HARCOURT. Oh! you are old enough to be my father.

MAX. Well, if I am, I am; that's etiquette, I suppose. Poor Grace! how often I have pitied her fate! That a young and beautiful creature should be driven into wretched splendour, or miserable poverty!

SIR HARCOURT. Wretched! wherefore? Lady Courtly wretched! Impossible!

MAX. Will she not be compelled to marry you, whether she likes you or not? — a choice between you and poverty. [Aside] And hang me if it isn't a

tie! But why do you not in your son Charles to me? I have seen him since he was a child — would never permit him to accept of my invitations to spend his year at Oak Hall, — of course, we share the pleasure of his company now.

SIR HARCOURT. He is not fit for society yet. He is a studious boy.

MAX. Boy! Why, he's fifteen and twenty.

SIR HARCOURT. Good gracious! Max, — you will permit me to know my own son's age, — he is not twenty.

MAX. I'm dumb.

SIR HARCOURT. You will excuse me while I indulge in the process of doubt. — Cool!

[Enter COOL]

Prepare my toilet. [Exit COOL] This is a ceremony, which, with me, sedes all others. I consider it a duty which every gentleman owes to himself — to render himself as agreeable an object as possible: and the least compliment a mortal can pay to a lady when she honours him by bestowing her extra care in the manufacture of her person, is to display her taste to the greatest possible advantage; and so, au revoir.

MAX. That's a good soul — his faults, and who has not? Forty years of age! Oh, monstrous! — does look uncommonly young for his age in spite of his foreign locks and complexion.

[Enter DAZZLE]

DAZZLE. Who's my friend, with the stick and gaiters, I wonder — one of the family — the governor, may be?

MAX. Who's this? Oh, Charles, is that you, my boy? How are you? [Aside] This is the boy.

DAZZLE. He knows me — he is respectable for a bailiff. [Aloud] Are you?

MAX. Your father has just left.

DAZZLE. [Aside] The devil he has! He has been dead these ten years. I see, he thinks I'm young Charles. [Aloud] The honour you would do upon me, I must unwillingly decline. I am not Mr. Courtly.

MAX. I beg your pardon — a moment, I suppose?

DAZZLE. Oh, a most intimate friend of years — distantly related to the family — one of my an-

died one of his. [*Aside*] Adam and

MAX. Are you on a visit here?

DAZZLE. Yes. Oh! yes. [*Aside*]
After a short one, I'm afraid.

MAX. [*Aside*] This appears a dash-
kind of fellow — as he is a friend of
Harcourt's, I'll invite him to the
dinner. [*Aloud*] Sir, if you are not
otherwise engaged, I shall feel honoured
to have your company at my house, Oak Hall,
Gloucestershire.

DAZZLE. Your name is —

MAX. Harkaway — Max Harkaway.

DAZZLE. Harkaway — let me see —
I ought to be related to the Harkaways,
I show.

MAX. A wedding is about to come
— will you take a part on the occa-
—?

DAZZLE. With pleasure! any part,
— that of the husband.

MAX. Have you any previous en-
— gagement?

DAZZLE. I was thinking — eh! why,
— I see. [*Aside*] Promised to meet
a tailor and his account to-morrow;
— ever, I'll postpone that. [*Aloud*]
— do you good shooting?

MAX. Shooting! Why, there's no
— thing at this time of the year.

DAZZLE. Oh! I'm in no hurry — I
— wait till the season, of course. I was
— speaking precautionally — you
— do good shooting?

MAX. The best in the country.

DAZZLE. Make yourself comfortable!
— say no more — I'm your man — wait
— you see how I'll murder your pre-
— sents.

MAX. Do you hunt?

DAZZLE. Pardon me — but will you
— at that? [*Aside*] Delicious and
— suggestive idea!

MAX. You ride?

DAZZLE. Anything! Everything!
— from a blood to a broomstick. Only
— let me a flash of lightning, and let
— it set on the back of it, and dam'me
— wouldn't astonish the elements.

MAX. Ha! ha!

DAZZLE. I'd put a girdle round about
— the earth, in very considerably less than
— five minutes.

MAX. Ah! ha! We'll show old
— deceptions how to spend the day.
— I imagine that Nature, at the earnest
— request of Fashion, made summer days
— for him to saunter in the Park, and
— every night, that he might have good
— to get cleared out at hazard or at

whist. Give me the yelping of a pack
of hounds, before the shuffling of a pack
of cards. What state can match the
chase in full cry, each vying with his
fellow which shall be most happy? A
thousand deaths fly by unheeded in that
one hour's life of ecstasy. Time is out-
run, and Nature seems to grudge our
bliss by making the day so short.

DAZZLE. No, for then rises up the
idol of my great adoration.

MAX. Who's that?

DAZZLE. The bottle — that lends a
lustre to the soul! — When the world
puts on its night-cap, and extinguishes
the sun — then comes the bottle! Oh,
mighty wine! Don't ask me to apos-
trophise. Wine and love are the only
two indescribable things in nature; but
I prefer the wine, because its conse-
quences are not entailed, and are more
easily got rid of.

MAX. How so?

DAZZLE. Love ends in matrimony,
wine in soda water.

MAX. Well, I can promise you as
fine a bottle as ever was cracked.

DAZZLE. Never mind the bottle, give
me the wine. Say no more; but, when
I arrive, just shake one of my hands, and
put the key of the cellar into the other,
and, if I don't make myself intimately
acquainted with its internal organiza-
tion — well, I say nothing — time will
show.

MAX. I foresee some happy days.

DAZZLE. And I some glorious nights.

MAX. It mustn't be a flying visit.

DAZZLE. I despise the word — I'll
stop a month with you.

MAX. Or a year or two.

DAZZLE. I'll live and die with you!

MAX. Ha! ha! Remember Max
Harkaway, Oak Hall, Gloucestershire.

DAZZLE. I'll remember — fare ye
well. [*MAX is going*] I say, holloa! —
Tallyho-o-o-o!

MAX. Yoicks! — Tallyho-o-o-o!

[*Exit*]

DAZZLE. There I am — quartered
for a couple of years, at the least. The
old boy wants somebody to ride his
horses, shoot his game, and keep a
restraint on the morals of the parish;
I'm eligible. What a lucky accident to
meet young Courtly last night! Who
could have thought it? — Yesterday, I
could not make certain of a dinner,
except at my own proper peril; to-day,
I would flirt with a banquet.

[Enter YOUNG COURTLY]

YOUNG COURTLY. What infernal row was that? Why, [seeing DAZZLE] are you here still?

DAZZLE. Yes. Ain't you delighted? I'll ring, and send the servant for my luggage.

YOUNG COURTLY. The devil you will! Why, you don't mean to say you seriously intend to take up a permanent residence here? [He rings the bell]

DAZZLE. Now, that's a most inhospitable insinuation.

YOUNG COURTLY. Might I ask your name?

DAZZLE. With a deal of pleasure — Richard Dazzle, late of the Unattached Volunteers, vulgarly entitled the Dirty Buffs.

[Enter MARTIN]

YOUNG COURTLY. Then, Mr. Richard Dazzle, I have the honour of wishing you a very good morning. Martin, show this gentleman the door.

DAZZLE. If he does, I'll kick Martin out of it. — No offence. [Exit MARTIN] Now, sir, permit me to place a dioramic view of your conduct before you. After bringing you safely home this morning — after indulgently waiting, whenever you took a passing fancy to a knocker or bell-pull — after conducting a retreat that would have reflected honour on Napoleon — you would kick me into the street, like a mangy cur; and that's what you call gratitude. Now, to show you how superior I am to petty malice, I give you an unlimited invitation to my house — my country house — to remain as long as you please.

YOUNG COURTLY. Your house!

DAZZLE. Oak Hall, Gloucestershire, — fine old place! — for further particulars see roadbook — that is, it nominally belongs to my old friend and relation, Max Harkaway; but I'm privileged. Capital old fellow — say, shall we be honoured?

YOUNG COURTLY. Sir, permit me to hesitate a moment. [Aside] Let me see: I go back to college to-morrow, so I shall not be missing; tradesmen begin to dun —

[Enter COOL]

I hear thunder; here is shelter ready for me.

COOL. Oh, Mr. Charles, Mr. Samuel Isaacs is in the hall, and swear will remain till he has arrested you.

YOUNG COURTLY. Does he! — so he is so obstinate — take him my compliments, and I will bet him five to one he will not.

DAZZLE. Double or quits, with kind regards.

COOL. But, sir, he has discovered your house in Curzon Street; he says he is aware the furniture, at least, belongs to you, and he will put a man in immediately.

YOUNG COURTLY. That's awkward — what's to be done?

DAZZLE. Ask him whether he couldn't make it a woman.

YOUNG COURTLY. I must trust to fate.

DAZZLE. I will give you my assurance, if it will be of any use to you, it is of none to me.

YOUNG COURTLY. No, sir; but in reply to your most generous and cordial invitation, if you be in earnest, I feel delighted to accept it.

DAZZLE. Certainly.

YOUNG COURTLY. Then off we go through the stables — down the main door — and so slip through my friend's fingers.

DAZZLE. But, stay, you must do so politely; say farewell to him before you part. Damn it, don't cut him!

YOUNG COURTLY. You jest!

DAZZLE. Here, lend me a candle. [COURTLY gives him one] Now, then, [Writes] "Our respects to Mr. Isaacs — sorry to have been prevented from seeing him." — Ha! ha!

YOUNG COURTLY. Ha! ha!

DAZZLE. We'll send him up stairs to game.

YOUNG COURTLY. [To COOL] Don't let my father see him.

[Exit YOUNG COURTLY]

DAZZLE]

COOL. What's this? — "Mr. Charles Courtly, P.P.C., returns thanks for your obliging inquiries."

END OF ACT I

ACT II

NE FIRST. — *The Lawn before Oak Hall, a fine Elizabethan mansion; a Drawing-Room is seen through large French windows at the back. Statues, urns, and garden chairs about the stage.*

[Enter PERT and JAMES]

PERT. James, Miss Grace desires me request that you will watch at the gate, and let her know when the fire's carriage is seen on the London Road.

JAMES. I will go to the lodge.

[Exit]

PERT. How I do long to see what sort of a man Sir Harcourt Courtly is! I say he is sixty; so he must be old, consequently ugly. If I was Miss Grace, I would rather give up all my money and marry the man I liked, than go to church with a stuffed eel-skin. My taste is everything, — she doesn't care to care whether he is sixty or seven; jokes at love; prepares for matrimony as she would for dinner; and it is a necessary evil, and what can't be endured must be endured. Now, I say it is against all nature; and she is never no woman, or a deeper one than I. If she prefers an old man to a young one. Here she comes! looking as seriously as if she was going to marry Mr. Jenks! my Mr. Jenks! whom nobody won't lead to the halter till I have got my honour.

[Enter GRACE from the Drawing-Room]

GRACE. Well, Pert? any signs of the fire yet?

PERT. No, Miss Grace; but James is gone to watch the road.

GRACE. In my uncle's letter, he mentions a Mr. Dazzle, whom he has intended; so you must prepare a room for him. He is some friend of my husband's. It is to be, and my uncle seems to have an extraordinary predilection for him. Apropos! I must not forget to give him a bouquet for the dear old man when he arrives.

PERT. The dear old man! Do you mean Sir Harcourt?

GRACE. Law, no! my uncle, of course. [Plucking flowers] What do I do for Sir Harcourt Courtly?

PERT. Isn't it odd, Miss, you have never seen your intended, though it has been so long since you were betrothed?

GRACE. Not at all; marriage matters are conducted now-a-days in a most mercantile manner; consequently, a previous acquaintance is by no means indispensable. Besides, my prescribed husband has been upon the continent for the benefit of his — property! They say a southern climate is a great restorer of consumptive estates.

PERT. Well, Miss, for my own part, I should like to have a good look at my bargain before I paid for it; 'specially when one's life is the price of the article. But why, ma'am, do you consent to marry in this blind-man's-buff sort of manner? What would you think if he were not quite so old?

GRACE. I should think he was a little younger.

PERT. I should like him all the better.

GRACE. That wouldn't I. A young husband might expect affection and nonsense, which 'twould be deceit in me to render; nor would he permit me to remain with my uncle. — Sir Harcourt takes me with the incumbrances on his estate, and I shall beg to be left among the rest of the live stock.

PERT. Ah, Miss! but some day you might chance to stumble over the man, — what could you do then?

GRACE. Do! beg the man's pardon, and request the man to pick me up again.

PERT. Ah! you were never in love, Miss?

GRACE. I never was, nor will be, till I am tired of myself and common sense. Love is a pleasant scape-goat for a little epidemic madness. I must have been inoculated in my infancy, for the infection passes over poor me in contempt.

[Enter JAMES]

JAMES. Two gentlemen, Miss Grace, have just alighted.

GRACE. Very well, James. [Exit JAMES] Love is pictured as a boy; in another century they will be wiser, and paint him as a fool, with cap and bells, without a thought above the jingling of his own folly. Now, Pert, remember this as a maxim, — A woman is always in love with one of two things.

PERT. What are they, Miss?

GRACE. A man, or herself — and I know which is the most profitable.

[Exit]

PERT. I wonder what my Jenks would say, if I was to ask him. Law!

here comes Mr. Meddle, his rival contemporary solicitor, as he calls him, — a nasty, prying, ugly wretch — what brings him here? He comes puffed with some news.

[Retires]

[Enter MEDDLE, with a newspaper]

MEDDLE. I have secured the only newspaper in the village — my character, as an attorney-at-law, depended on the monopoly of its information. — I took it up by chance, when this paragraph met my astonished view: [Reads] "We understand that the contract of marriage so long in abeyance on account of the lady's minority, is about to be celebrated, at Oak Hall, Gloucestershire, the well-known and magnificent mansion of Maximilian Harkaway, Esq., between Sir Harcourt Courtly, Baronet, of fashionable celebrity, and Miss Grace Harkaway, niece to the said Mr. Harkaway. The preparations are proceeding in the good old English style." Is it possible! I seldom swear, except in a witness box, but, damme, had it been known in the village, my reputation would have been lost; my voice in the parlour of the Red Lion mute, and Jenks, a fellow who calls himself a lawyer, without more capability than a broomstick, and as much impudence as a young barrister after getting a verdict by mistake; why, he would actually have taken the Reverend Mr. Spout by the button, which is now my sole privilege. Ah! here is Mrs. Pert: couldn't have hit upon a better person. I'll cross-examine her — Lady's maid to Miss Grace, — confidential purloiner of second-hand silk — a *nisi prius* of her mistress — Ah! sits on the woollack in the pantry, and dictates the laws of kitchen etiquette. — Ah! Mrs. Pert, good morning; permit me to say, — and my word as a legal character is not unduly considered — I venture to affirm, that you look a — quite like the — a —

PERT. Law! Mr. Meddle.

MEDDLE. Exactly like the law.

PERT. Ha! indeed; complimentary, I confess; like the law; tedious, prosy, made up of musty paper. You sha'n't have a long suit of me. Good morning.

[Going]

MEDDLE. Stay, Mrs. Pert; don't calumniate my calling, or dissimulate vulgar prejudices.

PERT. Vulgar! you talk of vulgarity to me! you, whose sole employment is

to sneak about like a pig, snoutin' the dust-hole of society, and fe' upon the bad ends of vice! you live upon the world's iniquity! miserable specimen of a bad sixteenth century!

MEDDLE. But, Mrs. Pert —

PERT. Don't but me, sir; I'll be butted by any such low fellow.

MEDDLE. This is slander; and I will lie.

PERT. Let it lie; lying is your business. I'll tell you what, Mr. Meddle; if, by my will, I would soon put a check upon your prying propensities. I'd treat you as the farmers do the inquisitive hound.

MEDDLE. How?

PERT. I would ring your nose.

MEDDLE. Not much information elicited from that witness. Jenks is at the bottom of this. I have very much hesitation in saying, Jenks is a libelous rascal; I heard reports that he was undermining my character here, through Mrs. Pert. Now I'm certain that an assault is expensive; but, I certainly will put by a small weekly stipend until I can afford to kick Jenks.

DAZZLE. [Outside] Come and see this way!

MEDDLE. Ah! whom have we? Visitors; I'll address them.

[Enter DAZZLE]

DAZZLE. Who's this, I wonder of the family? I must know him.

MEDDLE. Ah! how are ye?

MEDDLE. Quite well. Just arrived — ah! — um! — Might I request the honour of knowing whom I address?

DAZZLE. Richard Dazzle, Esq., and you —

MEDDLE. Mark Meddle, attorney-at-law.

[Enter YOUNG COURTLY]

DAZZLE. What detained you?

YOUNG COURTLY. My dear friend, I have just seen such a woman!

DAZZLE. [Aside] Hush! [Aloud] Permit me to introduce you to my old friend, Meddle. He's a capital fellow; know him.

MEDDLE. I feel honoured. Who is your friend?

DAZZLE. Oh, he? What, my friend? Oh! Augustus Hamilton.

YOUNG COURTLY. How d'ye do? [Looking off] There she is again!

MEDDLE [looking off]. Why, that is Miss Grace.

DAZZLE. Of course, Grace.

YOUNG COURTLY. I'll go and introduce myself. [DAZZLE stops him]

DAZZLE. [Aside] What are you about? would you insult my old friend, Meddle, by running away? [Aloud] I, Puddle, just show my friend the way, while I say how d'ye do to my old friend, Grace. [Aside] Cultivate his acquaintance.

[Exit. — YOUNG COURTLY looks after him.]

MEDDLE. Mr. Hamilton, might I have the liberty?

YOUNG COURTLY. [Looking off] I found the fellow!

MEDDLE. Sir, what did you remark?

YOUNG COURTLY. She's gone! Oh, you're here still, Mr. Thingomerry?

MEDDLE. Meddle, sir, Meddle, in the list of attorneys.

YOUNG COURTLY. Well, Muddle, or Meddle, or whoever you are, you are a pig.

MEDDLE. [Aside] How excessively impertinent! Mrs. Pert said I was a pig; now I'm a boar! I wonder what they'll do of me next.

YOUNG COURTLY. Mr. Thingamy, you take a word of advice?

MEDDLE. Feel honoured.

YOUNG COURTLY. Get out.

MEDDLE. Do you mean to — I don't understand.

YOUNG COURTLY. Delighted to increase your apprehension. You are a pig, Puddle.

MEDDLE. Ha! ha! another quadruple! Yes; beautiful — [Aside] I wish he'd call me something libellous: that would be too much to expect. — [Exit] Anything else?

YOUNG COURTLY. Some miserable, fogging scoundrel!

MEDDLE. Good! ha! ha!

YOUNG COURTLY. What do you mean by laughing at me?

MEDDLE. Ha! ha! ha! excellent! delicious!

YOUNG COURTLY. Mr. — are you ambitious of a kicking?

MEDDLE. Very, very — Go on — go on — go on.

YOUNG COURTLY [looking off]. Here she comes! I'll speak to her.

MEDDLE. But, sir — sir —

YOUNG COURTLY. Oh, go to the devil! [He runs off]

MEDDLE. There, there's a chance — gone! I have no hesitation in

saying that, in another minute, I should have been kicked; literally kicked — a legal luxury. Costs, damages, and actions rose up like sky-rockets in my aspiring soul, with golden tails reaching to the infinity of my hopes. [Looking] They are coming this way; Mr. Hamilton in close conversation with Lady Courtly that is to be. Crim. Con. — Courtly versus Hamilton — damages problematical — Meddle, chief witness for plaintiff — guinea a day — professional man! I'll take down their conversation verbatim.

[He retires behind a bush]

[Enter GRACE, followed by YOUNG COURTLY]

GRACE. Perhaps you would follow your friend into the dining-room; refreshment after your long journey must be requisite.

YOUNG COURTLY. Pardon me, madam; but the lovely garden and the loveliness before me is better refreshment than I could procure in any dining-room.

GRACE. Ha! Your company and compliments arrive together.

YOUNG COURTLY. I trust that a passing remark will not spoil so welcome an introduction as this by offending you.

GRACE. I am not certain that anything you could say would offend me.

YOUNG COURTLY. I never meant —

GRACE. I thought not. In turn, pardon me, when I request you will commence your visit with this piece of information: — I consider compliments impertinent, and sweetmeat language fulsome.

YOUNG COURTLY. I would condemn my tongue to a Pythagorean silence if I thought it could attempt to flatter.

GRACE. It strikes me, sir, that you are a stray bee from the hive of fashion; if so, reserve your honey for its proper cell. A truce to compliments. — You have just arrived from town, I apprehend.

YOUNG COURTLY. This moment I left mighty London, under the fever of a full season, groaning with the noisy pulse of wealth and the giddy whirling brain of fashion. Enchanting, busy London! how have I prevailed on myself to desert you! Next week the new ballet comes out, — the week after comes Ascot. — Oh!

GRACE. How agonizing must be the reflection.

YOUNG COURTLY. Torture! Can you inform me how you manage to avoid suicide here? If there was but an opera, even, within twenty miles! We couldn't get up a rustic ballet among the village girls? No? — ah!

GRACE. I am afraid you would find that difficult. How I contrive to support life I don't know — it is wonderful — but I have not precisely contemplated suicide yet, nor do I miss the opera.

YOUNG COURTLY. How can you manage to kill time?

GRACE. I can't. Men talk of killing time, while time quietly kills them. I have many employments — this week I devote to study and various amusements — next week to being married — the following week to repentance, perhaps.

YOUNG COURTLY. Married!

GRACE. You seem surprised; I believe it is of frequent occurrence in the metropolis. — Is it not?

YOUNG COURTLY. Might I ask to whom?

GRACE. A gentleman who has been strongly recommended to me for the situation of husband.

YOUNG COURTLY. What an extraordinary match! Would you not consider it advisable to see him, previous to incurring the consequences of such an act?

GRACE. You must be aware that fashion says otherwise. The gentleman swears eternal devotion to the lady's fortune, and the lady swears she will outvie him still. My lord's horses and my lady's diamonds shine through a few seasons, until a seat in Parliament, or the continent, stares them in the face; then, when thrown upon each other for resources of comfort, they begin to quarrel about the original conditions of the sale.

YOUNG COURTLY. Sale! No! that would be degrading civilization into Turkish barbarity.

GRACE. Worse, sir, a great deal worse; for there at least they do not attempt concealment of the barter; but here, every London ball-room is a marriage mart — young ladies are trotted out, while the mother, father, or chap-erone plays auctioneer, and knocks them down to the highest bidder — young men are ticketed up with their fortunes on their backs, — and Love, turned into a dapper shopman, descants on the excellent qualities of the material.

YOUNG COURTLY. Oh! that such a

custom could have ever emanated from the healthy soil of an English heart.

GRACE. No. It never did. Most of our literary dandyism and dandy literature, it was borrowed from the French.

YOUNG COURTLY. You seem to be at love.

GRACE. Love! why, the very air is a breathing satire upon man's — a mania, indigenous to human nature's jester, who plays off tricks upon the world, and trips up common sense. When I'm in love, I'll write an article for very lack of wit — prognosticating a sighing season — when to bewail tears — about this time, expect money to be prevalent! Ha! ha! should I lay out my life in love's upon the bare security of a man's

[Enter JAMES]

JAMES. The Squire, madam, has just arrived, and another gentleman is waiting for him.

GRACE. [Aside] My intention is to suppose. [Exit JAMES]

YOUNG COURTLY. I perceive you are one of the railers against what is called the follies of high life.

GRACE. No, not particularly. I deprecate all folly. By what privilege can the west-end mint issue its surdity, which, if coined in the market, would be voted vulgar?

YOUNG COURTLY. By a sovereign right — because it has Fashion's sanction upon its side, and that stamps it correct.

GRACE. Poor Fashion, for how long she has hast thou to answer! The gamester pawn his birth-right for fashion; the rake steals his friend's wife for fashion; each abandons himself to the suggestions of impulse, calling it the breeze of fashion.

YOUNG COURTLY. Is this idolatry, or is the world so radically vicious?

GRACE. No; the root is well exposed as the body was, until it had outgrown its native soil; but now, like a giant lying over Europe, it pillows its head in Italy, its heart in France, and it supports the heels alone its sole support in England.

YOUNG COURTLY. Pardon me, madam, you wrong yourself to be so against your own inheritance. You are a kingdom to which loveliness attests your title.

GRACE. A mighty realm, forsooth, with milliners for ministers, a cabal of coxcombs, envy for my homage

my revenue — my right of rule depending on the shape of a bonnet or sit of a pelisse, with the next grand title as my heir-apparent. Mr. Hamlet, when I am crowned, I shall feel obliged to abdicate in your favour.

[*Curtseys and exit*]

YOUNG COURTLY. What did she mean by that? Hang me if I can understand her — she is evidently not used to flattery. Ha! — takes every word I say for infallible truth — requires the sanction of a compliment, as if it were a theorem in Euclid. She said she was not to marry, but I rather imagine she was in jest. 'Pon my life, I feel a queer at the contemplation of such an idea — I'll follow her. [MEDDLE *sings down*] Oh! perhaps this booby will inform me something about her. MEDDLE *makes signs at him*] What the devil is he at!

MEDDLE. It won't do — no — ah! — it's not to be done.

YOUNG COURTLY. What do you mean?

MEDDLE [*points after GRACE*]. Countess retained — cause to come off!

YOUNG COURTLY. Cause to come off!

MEDDLE. Miss Grace is about to be married.

YOUNG COURTLY. Is it possible?

MEDDLE. Certainly. If I have the right wing out of the deeds —

YOUNG COURTLY. To whom?

MEDDLE. Ha! hem! Oh, yes! I can say — Information being scarce in the market, I hope to make mine valuable.

YOUNG COURTLY. Married! married!

MEDDLE. Now I shall have another piece.

YOUNG COURTLY. I'll run and ascertain the truth of this from Dazzle.

[*Exit*]

MEDDLE. It's of no use: he either won't kick me, or he can't afford it — in either case, he is beneath my notice. Who comes here? — can it be Sir Harcourt Courtly himself? It can be no other.

[*Enter COOL*]

I have the honour to bid you welcome to Oak Hall and the village of Dazzle-borough.

COOL. [*Aside*] Excessively polite. Thank you.

MEDDLE. The township contains two thousand inhabitants.

COOL. Does it! I am delighted to hear it.

MEDDLE. [*Aside*] I can charge him for that — ahem — six and eightpence is not much — but it is a beginning. [*Aloud*] If you will permit me, I can inform you of the different commodities for which it is famous.

COOL. Much obliged — but here comes Sir Harcourt Courtly, my master, and Mr. Harkaway — any other time I shall feel delighted.

MEDDLE. Oh! [*Aside*] Mistook the man for the master. [*He retires up*]

[*Enter MAX and SIR HARCOURT*]

MAX. Here we are at last. Now give ye welcome to Oak Hall, Sir Harcourt, heartily!

SIR HARCOURT [*languidly*]. Cool, assist me.

[*COOL takes off his furred cloak and gloves; gives him white gloves and a handkerchief*]

MAX. Why, you require unpacking as carefully as my best bin of port. Well, now you are decanted, tell me what did you think of my park as we came along.

SIR HARCOURT. That it would never come to an end. You said it was only a stone's throw from your infernal lodge to the house; why, it's ten miles, at least.

MAX. I'll do it in ten minutes any day.

SIR HARCOURT. Yes, in a steam carriage. Cool, perfume my handkerchief.

MAX. Don't do it. Don't! perfume in the country! why, it's high treason in the very face of Nature; 'tis introducing the robbed to the robber. Here are the sweets from which your fulsome essences are pilfered, and libelled with their names; — don't insult them, too.

SIR HARCOURT. [*To MEDDLE*] Oh! cull me a bouquet, my man!

MAX [*turning*]. Ah, Meddle! how are you? This is Lawyer Meddle.

SIR HARCOURT. Oh! I took him for one of your people.

MEDDLE. Ah! naturally — um — Sir Harcourt Courtly, I have the honour to congratulate — happy occasion approaches. Ahem! I have no hesitation in saying this *very* happy occasion approaches.

SIR HARCOURT. Cool, is the conversation addressed towards me?

COOL. I believe so, Sir Harcourt.

MEDDLE. Oh, certainly! I was complimenting you.

SIR HARCOURT. Sir, you are very good; the honour is undeserved; but I am only in the habit of receiving compliments from the fair sex. Men's admiration is so damnably insipid.

MEDDLE. I had hoped to make a unit on that occasion.

SIR HARCOURT. Yes, and you hoped to put an infernal number of cyphers after your unit on that and any other occasion.

MEDDLE. Ha! ha! very good. Why, I did hope to have the honour of drawing out the deeds; for, whatever Jenks may say to the contrary, I have no hesitation in saying —

SIR HARCOURT [*putting him aside*]. [To MAX] If the future Lady Courtly be visible at so unfashionable an hour as this, I shall beg to be introduced.

MAX. Visible! Ever since six this morning, I'll warrant ye. Two to one she is at dinner.

SIR HARCOURT. Dinner! Is it possible? Lady Courtly dine at half-past one P.M.!

MEDDLE. I rather prefer that hour to peck a little my —

SIR HARCOURT. Dear me! who was addressing you?

MEDDLE. Oh! I beg pardon.

MAX. Here, James! [*Calling*]

[*Enter JAMES*]

Tell Miss Grace to come here directly. [*Exit JAMES*] Now prepare, Courtly, for, though I say it, she is — with the exception of my bay mare, Kitty — the handsomest thing in the country. Considering she is a biped, she is a wonder! Full of blood, sound wind and limb, plenty of bone, sweet coat, in fine condition, with a thorough-bred step, as dainty as a pet greyhound.

SIR HARCOURT. Damme, don't compare her to a horse!

MAX. Well, I wouldn't, but she's almost as fine a creature, — close similarities.

MEDDLE. Oh, very fine creature! Close similarity, amounting to identity.

SIR HARCOURT. Good gracious, sir! What can a lawyer know about women!

MEDDLE. Everything. The consistorial court is fine study of the character, and I have no hesitation in saying that I have examined more women than Jenks, or —

SIR HARCOURT. Oh, damn Jenks!

MEDDLE. Sir, thank you. him again, sir, damn him again!

[*Enter GRACE*]

GRACE. My dear uncle!

MAX. Ah, Grace, you little come here.

SIR HARCOURT [*eyeing her through his glass*]. Oh, dear! she is a Venus! I'm astonished and delighted.

MAX. Won't you kiss your uncle? [*He kisses her*]

SIR HARCOURT [*draws an agony face*]. Oh! — ah — um! — N'im — my privilege in embryo — It's very tantalizing, though.

MAX. You are not glad to see you are not. [*Kisses him*]

SIR HARCOURT. Oh; no, no! that is too much. I shall do some horrible presently, if this goes [Aloud] I should be sorry to do any little ebullition of affection; but ahem! May I be permitted?

MAX. Of course you may. Grace, is Sir Harcourt, your husband that will be. Go to him, girl.

SIR HARCOURT. Permit me to pay homage to the charms, the presence which have placed me in this Paradise.

[*SIR HARCOURT and GRACE*]

[*Enter DAZZLE*]

DAZZLE. Ah! old fellow, how do you?

MAX. I'm glad to see you! Am I comfortably quartered, yet, eh?

DAZZLE. Splendidly quartered! a place you've got here! Here, Milton.

[*Enter YOUNG COURTLY*]

Permit me to introduce my friend Augustus Hamilton. Capital fellow! drinks like a sieve, and rides like a thunder-storm.

MAX. Sir, I'm devilish glad to see you. Here, Sir Harcourt, permit me to introduce to you —

YOUNG COURTLY. The devil!

DAZZLE. [*Aside*] What's the matter?

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] That is my governor, by Jupiter!

DAZZLE. [*Aside*] What's that? Whiskers? you don't say that!

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] What's to be done now?

MAX. Mr. Hamilton, Sir Harcourt Courtly — Sir Harcourt Courtly, Mr. Hamilton.

SIR HARCOURT. Hamilton! Good gracious! God bless me! — why, Charles, is it possible? — why, Max, 't's my son!

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] What all I do!

MAX. Your son!

GRACE. Your son, Sir Harcourt! I give you a son as old as that gentleman!

SIR HARCOURT. No — that is — a — — not by twenty years — a — Charles, why don't you answer me, sir?

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside to DAZZLE*] What shall I say?

DAZZLE. [*Aside*] Deny your identity.

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] Capital! [*Aloud*] What's the matter, sir?

SIR HARCOURT. How came you here, sir?

YOUNG COURTLY. By one of Newnham's — best fours — in twelve hours at a quarter.

SIR HARCOURT. Isn't your name Charles Courtly?

YOUNG COURTLY. Not to my knowledge.

SIR HARCOURT. Do you mean to say that you are usually called Augustus Hamilton?

YOUNG COURTLY. Lamentable fact and quite correct.

SIR HARCOURT. Cool, is that my name?

COOL. No, sir — it is not Mr. Charles — but is very like him.

MAX. I cannot understand all this.

GRACE. [*Aside*] I think I can.

DAZZLE. [*Aside to YOUNG COURTLY*] Give him a touch of the indignant.

YOUNG COURTLY. Allow me to say, What-d'ye-call-'em Hartly —

SIR HARCOURT. Hartly, sir! Courtly, sir!

YOUNG COURTLY. Well, Hartly, or Court-heart, or whatever your name may be, I say your conduct is — a — a — and were it not for the presence of my lady, I should feel inclined — to —

SIR HARCOURT. No, no, that can't be my son, — he never would address me in that way.

MAX [*coming down*]. What is all this?

SIR HARCOURT. Sir, your likeness to my son Charles is so astonishing, that it, at a moment — the equilibrium of my

etiquette — 'pon my life, I — permit me to request your pardon.

MEDDLE. [*To SIR HARCOURT*] Sir Harcourt, don't apologize, don't — bring on an action. I'm witness.

SIR HARCOURT. Some one take this man away.

[*Enter JAMES*]

JAMES. Luncheon is on the table, sir.

SIR HARCOURT. Miss Harkaway, I never swore before a lady in my life — except when I promised to love and cherish the late Lady Courtly, which I took care to preface with an apology, — I was compelled to the ceremony, and consequently not answerable for the language — but to that gentleman's identity I would have pledged — my hair.

GRACE. [*Aside*] If that security were called for, I suspect the answer would be — no effects.

[*Exeunt SIR HARCOURT and GRACE*]

MEDDLE. [*To MAX*] I have something very particular to communicate.

MAX. Can't listen at present. [*Exit*]

MEDDLE. [*To DAZZLE and YOUNG COURTLY*] I can afford you information, which I —

DAZZLE. Oh, don't bother!

YOUNG COURTLY. Go to the devil!

[*Exeunt*]

MEDDLE. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that is the height of ingratitude. — Oh — Mr. Cool — can you oblige me? [*Presents his account*]

COOL. Why, what is all this?

MEDDLE. Small account *versus* you — to giving information concerning the last census of the population of Old-borough and vicinity, six and eight-pence.

COOL. Oh, you mean to make me pay for this, do you?

MEDDLE. Unconditionally.

COOL. Well, I have no objection — the charge is fair — but remember, I am a servant on board wages, — will you throw in a little advice gratis — if I give you the money?

MEDDLE. Ahem! — I will.

COOL. A fellow has insulted me. I want to abuse him — what terms are actionable?

MEDDLE. You may call him anything you please, providing there are no witnesses.

COOL. Oh, may I? [*Looks round*] — then you rascally, pettifogging scoundrel!

MEDDLE. Hallo!

COOL. You mean — dirty — disgrace to your profession.

MEDDLE. Libel — slander —

COOL. Aye, but where are your witnesses?

MEDDLE. Give me the costs — six and eighteen pence.

COOL. I deny that you gave me information at all.

MEDDLE. You do!

COOL. Yes, where are your witnesses? *[Exit]*

MEDDLE. Ah — damme! *[Exit]*

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE FIRST. — *A Morning-Room in Oak Hall, French windows opening to the Lawn.*

[MAX and SIR HARCOURT seated on one side, DAZZLE on the other; GRACE and YOUNG COURTLY are playing chess at back. All dressed for dinner]

MAX. *[Aside to SIR HARCOURT]* What can I do?

SIR HARCOURT. Get rid of them civilly.

MAX. What, turn them out, after I particularly invited them to stay a month or two?

SIR HARCOURT. Why, they are disreputable characters; as for that young fellow, in whom my Lady Courtly appears so particularly absorbed, — I am bewildered — I have written to town for my Charles, my boy — it certainly is the most extraordinary likeness —

DAZZLE. Sir Harcourt, I have an idea —

SIR HARCOURT. Sir, I am delighted to hear it. — *[Aside]* That fellow is a swindler.

MAX. I met him at your house.

SIR HARCOURT. Never saw him before in all my life.

DAZZLE *[crossing to SIR HARCOURT]*. I will bet you five to one that I can beat you three out of four games at billiards, with one hand.

SIR HARCOURT. No, sir.

DAZZLE. I don't mind giving you ten points in fifty.

SIR HARCOURT. Sir, I never gamble.

DAZZLE. You don't! Well, I'll teach you — easiest thing in life — you have every requisite — good temper.

SIR HARCOURT. I have not, sir.

DAZZLE. A long-headed, kno old buck.

SIR HARCOURT. Sir!

[They go up conversing with I]

GRACE. Really, Mr. Hamilton, improve. — A young man pays visit, as you half intimate, to es inconvenient friends — that is co mentary to us, his hosts.

YOUNG COURTLY. Nay, that is severe.

GRACE. After an acquaintance of two days, you sit down to teach chess, and domestic economy at same time. — Might I ask where graduated in that science — where learned all that store of matrim advice which you have obliged me v

YOUNG COURTLY. I imbibed madam, from the moment I beheld and having studied my subject amore, took my degrees from eyes.

GRACE. Oh, I see you are a M of Arts already.

YOUNG COURTLY. Unfortunat no — I shall remain a bachelor — you can assist me to that honour.

HARCOURT comes down — *aside to DAZZLE* Keep the old boy away.

DAZZLE. *[Aside]* How do you on?

YOUNG COURTLY. *[Aside]* S didly!

SIR HARCOURT. Is the convers strictly confidential? — or might I

DAZZLE *[taking his arm]*. Oh, in the least, my dear sir — we remarking that rifle shooting wa excellent diversion during the sun months.

SIR HARCOURT *[drawing himself]*. Sir, I was addressing —

DAZZLE. And I was saying wh pity it was I couldn't find any reasonable enough to back his op with long odds — come out on lawn, and pitch up your hat, and I hold you ten to one I put a bullet in every time, at forty paces.

SIR HARCOURT. No, sir — I con you —

MAX. Here, all of you — look, is Lady Gay Spanker coming across lawn at a hand gallop!

SIR HARCOURT *[running to the dow]*. Bless me, the horse is run away!

MAX. Look how she takes fence! there's a seat.

SIR HARCOURT. Lady Gay Spanker no may she be?

JAMES. Gay Spanker, Sir Harcourt? cousin and dearest friend — you like her.

SIR HARCOURT. It will be my devoir, if it is your wish — though it will be no task in your presence.

JAMES. I am sure she will like you.

SIR HARCOURT. Ha! ha! I flatter myself.

YOUNG COURTLY. Who, and what is

JAMES. Glee, glee made a living — Nature, in some frolic mood, put up a merry devil in her eye, and, by Art, stole joy's brightest harmony to thrill her laugh, which peals out like a bell's knell. Her cry rings loudest in the field — the very echo loves it, and, as each hill attempts to ape her voice, earth seems to laugh that it is a thing so glad.

JAMES. Ay, the merriest minx I ever

heard. [LADY GAY laughs without]

LADY GAY. [Without] Max!

JAMES. Come in, you mischievous

[Enter JAMES]

JAMES. Mr. Adolphus and Lady Gay Spanker.

LADY GAY, fully equipped in riding habit, etc.]

LADY GAY. Ha! ha! Well, Governor, how are ye? I have been down times, climbing up your stairs in long clothes. How are you, Grace? [Kisses her] There, don't fidget, and there — [Kisses him] there's for you.

SIR HARCOURT. Ahem!

LADY GAY. Oh, gracious, I didn't see you had visitors.

JAMES. Permit me to introduce — Sir Harcourt Courtly, Lady Gay Spanker.

DAZZLE. Mr. Hamilton — Lady Gay Spanker.

SIR HARCOURT. [Aside] A devilish woman!

DAZZLE. [Aside to SIR HARCOURT] A devilish fine woman.

LADY GAY. You mustn't think any of the liberties I take with my old here — bless him!

SIR HARCOURT. Oh, no! [Aside] I thought I should like to be in his

LADY GAY. I am so glad you have met, Sir Harcourt. Now we shall be

able to make a decent figure at the heels of a hunt.

SIR HARCOURT. Does your ladyship hunt?

LADY GAY. Ha! I say, Governor, does my ladyship hunt? I rather flatter myself that I do hunt! Why, Sir Harcourt, one might as well live without laughing as without hunting. Man was fashioned expressly to fit a horse. Are not hedges and ditches created for leaps? Of course! And I look upon foxes to be one of the most blessed dispensations of a benign Providence.

SIR HARCOURT. Yes, it is all very well in the abstract: I tried it once.

LADY GAY. Once! Only once?

SIR HARCOURT. Once, only once. And then the animal ran away with me.

LADY GAY. Why, you would not have him walk?

SIR HARCOURT. Finding my society disagreeable, he instituted a series of kicks, with a view to removing the annoyance; but aided by the united stays of the mane and tail, I frustrated his intentions. His next resource, however, was more effectual, for he succeeded in rubbing me off against a tree.

MAX AND LADY GAY. Ha! ha! ha!

DAZZLE. How absurd you must have looked with your legs and arms in the air, like a shipwrecked tea-table.

SIR HARCOURT. Sir, I never looked absurd in my life. Ah, it may be very amusing in relation, I dare say, but very unpleasant in effect.

LADY GAY. I pity you, Sir Harcourt; it was criminal in your parents to neglect your education so shamefully.

SIR HARCOURT. Possibly; but be assured I shall never break my neck awkwardly from a horse, when it might be accomplished with less trouble from a bed-room window.

YOUNG COURTLY. [Aside] My dad will be caught by this she-Bucephalus tamer.

MAX. Ah! Sir Harcourt, had you been here a month ago, you would have witnessed the most glorious run that ever swept over merry England's green cheek — a steeple-chase, sir, which I intended to win, but my horse broke down the day before. I had a chance, notwithstanding, and but for Gay here, I should have won. How I regretted my absence from it! How did my filly behave herself, Gay?

LADY GAY. Gloriously, Max! gloriously! There were sixty horses in the field, all mettle to the bone: the start was a picture—away we went in a cloud—pell-mell—helter-skelter—the fools first, as usual, using themselves up—we soon passed them—first your Kitty, then my Blueskin, and Craven's colt last. Then came the tug—Kitty skimmed the walls—Blueskin flew over the fences—the Colt neck and neck, and half a mile to run—at last the Colt baulked a leap and went wild. Kitty and I had it all to ourselves—she was three lengths ahead as we breasted the last wall, six feet, if an inch, and a ditch on the other side. Now, for the first time, I gave Blueskin his head—ha! ha!—Away he flew like a thunderbolt—over went the filly—I over the same spot, leaving Kitty in the ditch—walked the steeple, eight miles in thirty minutes, and scarcely turned a hair.

ALL. Bravo! Bravo!

LADY GAY. Do you hunt?

DAZZLE. Hunt! I belong to a hunting family. I was born on horseback and cradled in a kennel! Aye, and I hope I may die with a whoo-whoop!

MAX. [To SIR HARCOURT] You must leave your town habits in the smoke of London: here we rise with the lark.

SIR HARCOURT. Haven't the remotest conception when that period is.

GRACE. The man that misses sunrise loses the sweetest part of his existence.

SIR HARCOURT. Oh, pardon me; I have seen sunrise frequently after a ball, or from the windows of my travelling carriage, and I always considered it disagreeable.

GRACE. I love to watch the first tear that glistens in the opening eye of morning, the silent song the flowers breathe, the thrilling choir of the woodland minstrels, to which the modest brook trickles applause:—these swelling out the sweetest chord of sweet creation's matins, seem to pour some soft and merry tale into the daylight's ear, as if the waking world had dreamed a happy thing, and now smiled o'er the telling of it.

SIR HARCOURT. The effect of a rustic education! Who could ever discover music in a damp foggy morning, except those confounded waits, who never play in tune, and a miserable wretch who makes a point of crying coffee under my

window just as I am persuading to sleep; in fact, I never hear music worth listening to, except Italy.

LADY GAY. No? then you heard a well-trained English pack-ery?

SIR HARCOURT. Full cry!

LADY GAY. Aye! there is ha if you will. Give me the trumpet—the spotted pack just catching! What a chorus is their yelp! The hallo, blent with a peal of fearless mirth! That's our old music,—match it where you can.

SIR HARCOURT. [Aside] I must about Lady Gay Spanker.

DAZZLE. [Aside to SIR HARCOURT] Ah, would you—

LADY GAY. Time then appears young as love, and plumes as spring. Away we go! The earth back to aid our course! Horse, hound, earth, heaven!—all—one piece of glowing ecstasy! To love the world, myself, and every thing,—my jocund soul cries of very glee, as it could wish that attention had but one mouth that I kiss it!

SIR HARCOURT. [Aside] I were the mouth!

MAX. Why, we will regenerate Baronet! But Gay, where is your band?—Where is Adolphus!

LADY GAY. Bless me, where Dolly?

SIR HARCOURT. You are married then?

LADY GAY. I have a husband where, though I can't find him just Dolly, dear! [Aside to MAX] I am a snorer, at home I always whistle. I want him.

[Enter SPANKER]

SPANKER. Here I am,—did you call me, Gay?

SIR HARCOURT. [eyeing him] What that your husband?

LADY GAY. [Aside] Yes, blest stupid face, that's my Dolly.

MAX. Permit me to introduce Sir Harcourt Courtly.

SPANKER. How d'ye do? I am—um!

LADY GAY. Delighted to have the honour of making the acquaintance of a gentleman so highly celebrated in the world of fashion.

SPANKER. Oh, yes, delighted

— quite — very, so delighted —
ighted!

[Gets quite confused, draws on his
glove, and tears it]

LADY GAY. Where have you been,
ly?

PANKER. Oh, ah, I was just outside.
MAX. Why did you not come in?

PANKER. I'm sure I didn't — I
t exactly know, but I thought as —
haps — I can't remember.

DAZZLE. Shall we have the pleasure
your company to dinner?

PANKER. I always dine — usually
that is, unless Gay remains.

LADY GAY. Stay dinner, of course;
came on purpose to stop three or
r days with you.

GRACE. Will you excuse my ab-
ce, Gay?

MAX. What! what! Where are
going? What takes you away?

GRACE. We must postpone the
ner till Gay is dressed.

MAX. Oh, never mind, — stay where
are.

GRACE. No, I must go.

MAX. I say you sha'n't! I will be
g in my own house.

GRACE. Do, my dear uncle; — you
be king, and I'll be your prime
sister, — that is, I will rule, and you
ll have the honour of taking the
sequences. [Exit]

LADY GAY. Well said, Grace; have
r own way; it is the only thing
women ought to be allowed.

MAX. Come, Gay, dress for dinner.
SIR HARCOURT. Permit me, Lady
y Spanker.

LADY GAY. With pleasure, — what
you want?

SIR HARCOURT. To escort you.

LADY GAY. Oh, never mind, I can
ort myself, thank you, and Dolly
; — come, dear! [Exit]

SIR HARCOURT. Au revoir!

SPANKER. Ah, thank you!

[Exit awkwardly]

SIR HARCOURT. What an ill-assorted
r!

MAX. Not a bit! She married him
freedom, and she has it; he married
for protection, and he has it.

SIR HARCOURT. How he ever sum-
ned courage to propose to her, I can't
ss.

MAX. Bless you, he never did.
proposed to him! She says he
ld, if he could; but as he couldn't,
did it for him. [Exeunt, laughing]

[Enter COOL with a letter]

COOL. Mr. Charles, I have been
watching to find you alone. Sir Har-
court has written to town for you.

YOUNG COURTLY. The devil he has!

COOL. He expects you down to-
morrow evening.

DAZZLE. Oh! he'll be punctual. A
thought strikes me.

YOUNG COURTLY. Pooh! Con-
found your thoughts! I can think of
nothing but the idea of leaving Grace,
at the very moment when I had estab-
lished the most —

DAZZLE. What if I can prevent her
marriage with your Governor?

YOUNG COURTLY. Impossible!

DAZZLE. He's pluming himself for
the conquest of Lady Gay Spanker. It
will not be difficult to make him be-
lieve she accedes to his suit. And if she
would but join in the plan —

YOUNG COURTLY. I see it all. And
do you think she would?

DAZZLE. I mistake my game if she
would not.

COOL. Here comes Sir Harcourt!

DAZZLE. I'll begin with him. Re-
tire, and watch how I'll open the cam-
paign for you.

[YOUNG COURTLY and COOL retire]

[Enter SIR HARCOURT]

SIR HARCOURT. Here is that cursed
fellow again.

DAZZLE. Ah, my dear old friend!

SIR HARCOURT. Mr. Dazzle!

DAZZLE. I have a secret of impor-
tance to disclose to you. Are you a man
of honour? Hush! don't speak; you
are. It is with the greatest pain I am
compelled to request you, as a gentle-
man, that you will shun studiously the
society of Lady Gay Spanker!

SIR HARCOURT. Good gracious!
Wherefore, and by what right do you
make such a demand?

DAZZLE. Why, I am distantly related
to the Spankers.

SIR HARCOURT. Why, damme, sir,
if you don't appear to be related to every
family in Great Britain!

DAZZLE. A good many of the nobil-
ity claim me as a connexion. But, to
return — she is much struck with your
address; evidently, she laid herself out
for display.

SIR HARCOURT. Ha! you surprise
me!

DAZZLE. To entangle you.

SIR HARCOURT. Ha! ha! why, it did appear like it.

DAZZLE. You will spare her for my sake; give her no encouragement; if disgrace come upon my relatives, the Spankers, I should never hold up my head again.

SIR HARCOURT. [*Aside*] I shall achieve an easy conquest, and a glorious. Ha! ha! I never remarked it before; but this is a gentleman.

DAZZLE. May I rely on your generosity?

SIR HARCOURT. Faithfully. [*Shakes his hand*] Sir, I honour and esteem you; but, might I ask, how came you to meet our friend, Max Harkaway, in my house in Belgrave Square?

[*Re-enter YOUNG COURTLY. Sits on sofa at back*]

DAZZLE. Certainly. I had an acceptance of your son's for one hundred pounds.

SIR HARCOURT. [*Astonished*] Of my son's? Impossible!

DAZZLE. Ah, sir, fact! he paid a debt for a poor, unfortunate man — fifteen children — half-a-dozen wives — the devil knows what all.

SIR HARCOURT. Simple boy!

DAZZLE. Innocent youth, I have no doubt; when you have the hundred convenient, I shall feel delighted.

SIR HARCOURT. Oh! follow me to my room, and if you have the document, it will be happiness to me to pay it. Poor Charles! good heart!

DAZZLE. Oh, a splendid heart! I dare say. [*Exit SIR HARCOURT*] Come here; write me the bill.

YOUNG COURTLY. What for?

DAZZLE. What for? why, to release the unfortunate man and his family, to be sure, from jail.

YOUNG COURTLY. Who is he?

DAZZLE. Yourself.

YOUNG COURTLY. But I haven't fifteen children!

DAZZLE. Will you take your oath of that?

YOUNG COURTLY. Nor four wives.

DAZZLE. More shame for you, with all that family. Come, don't be obstinate; write and date it back.

YOUNG COURTLY. Ay, but where is the stamp?

DAZZLE. Here they are, of all patterns. [*Pulls out a pocketbook*] I keep them ready drawn in case of necessity, all but the date and acceptance. Now,

if you are in an autographic humour, can try how your signature will look across half a dozen of them; — then write — exactly — you know the paper — across — good — and thank your lucky stars that you have found a friend at last, that gives you money and vice.

[*Takes paper and pen*]

YOUNG COURTLY. Things are approaching to a climax; I must appear in *proprid personâ* — and immediately, but I must first ascertain what are real sentiments of this riddle of a woman. Does she love me? I flatter myself. By Jove, here she comes — I shall not have such an opportunity again!

[*Enter GRACE*]

GRACE. I wish I had never seen Hamilton. Why does every object appear robbed of the charm it once presented to me? Why do I shudder at the contemplation of this marriage, which, till now, was to me a subject of indifference? Am I in love? In love, if I am, my past life has been the victim of raising up a pedestal to place myself folly on — I — the infidel — the rascal.

YOUNG COURTLY. Meditating matrimony, madam?

GRACE. [*Aside*] He little thinks was the subject of my meditation. [*Aloud*] No.

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] I must unmask my battery now.

GRACE. [*Aside*] How foolish I am — he will perceive that I tremble. I must appear at ease.

YOUNG COURTLY. Eh? ah! um.

GRACE. Ah! [*They sink into silence again. Aside*] How very awkward.

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] It is a very difficult subject to begin. [*Aloud*] Madam — ahem — there was — is —

mean — I was about to remark — [*Aside*] Hang me if it is not a slippery subject. I must brush up my faculties; attack her in her own way.

[*Aloud*] Sing! oh, muse! [*Aside*] Why, I have made love before to a hundred women!

GRACE. [*Aside*] I wish I had something to do, for I have nothing to say.

YOUNG COURTLY. Madam — this is — a subject so fraught with fatal consequences to my future life, that you must pardon my lack of delicacy, should a too free expression mar the fervent courtesies of its intent. To you, I feel aware, I must appear in the light of a comparative stranger.

GRACE. *[Aside]* I know what's
 ing.
 YOUNG COURTLY. Of you — I know
 aps too much for my own peace.
 GRACE. *[Aside]* He is in love.
 YOUNG COURTLY. I forget all that
 before I saw your beauteous self;
 em born into another world — my
 re changed — the beams of that
 nt face falling on my soul, have, from
 chaos, warmed into life the flowrets
 fection, whose maiden odours now
 toward the sun, pouring forth on
 e pure tongue a mite of adoration,
 ut the voices of a universe. *[Aside]*
 t's something in her own style.
 GRACE. Mr. Hamilton!
 YOUNG COURTLY. You cannot feel
 rised —
 GRACE. I am more than surprised.
 de] I am delighted.
 YOUNG COURTLY. Do not speak so
 ly.
 GRACE. You have offended me.
 YOUNG COURTLY. No, madam; no
 an, whatever her state, can be
 ded by the adoration even of the
 nest; it is myself whom I have
 ded and deceived — but still I ask
 e pardon.
 GRACE. *[Aside]* Oh! he thinks I am
 sing him. *[Aloud]* I am not ex-
 y offended, but —
 YOUNG COURTLY. Consider my posi-
 — a few days — and an insur-
 ntable barrier would have placed
 beyond my wildest hopes — you
 ld have been my mother.
 GRACE. I should have been your
 her! *[Aside]* I thought so.
 YOUNG COURTLY. No — that is, I
 nt Sir Harcourt Courtly's bride.
 GRACE. *[With great emphasis]*
 er!
 YOUNG COURTLY. How! never!
 y I then hope? — you turn away —
 would not lacerate me by a refusal?
 GRACE. *[Aside]* How stupid he is!
 YOUNG COURTLY. Still silent! I
 ak you, Miss Grace — I ought to
 e expected this — fool that I have
 a — one course alone remains —
 well!
 GRACE. *[Aside]* Now he's going.
 YOUNG COURTLY. Farewell forever!
 s] Will you not speak one word?
 all leave this house immediately — I
 ll not see you again.
 GRACE. Unhand me, sir, I insist.
 YOUNG COURTLY. *[Aside]* Oh!
 t an ass I've been! *[Rushes up to*

her, and seizes her hand] Release this
 hand? Never! never! *[Kissing it]*
 Never will I quit this hand! it shall be
 my companion in misery — in solitude
 — when you are far away.
 GRACE. Oh! should any one come!
[Drops her handkerchief; he stoops to
pick it up] For heaven's sake do not
 kneel.
 YOUNG COURTLY. *[Kneels]* Forever
 thus prostrate, before my soul's saint, I
 will lead a pious life of eternal adora-
 tion.
 GRACE. Should we be discovered
 thus — pray, Mr. Hamilton — pray —
 pray.
 YOUNG COURTLY. Pray! I am
 praying; what more can I do?
 GRACE. Your conduct is shameful.
 YOUNG COURTLY. It is. *[Rises]*
 GRACE. And if I do not scream, it is
 not for your sake — that — but it might
 alarm the family.
 YOUNG COURTLY. It might — it
 would. Say, am I wholly indifferent
 to you? I entreat one word — I im-
 plore you — do not withdraw your
 hand — *[She snatches it away — he puts*
his round her waist] You smile.
 GRACE. Leave me, dear Mr. Hamil-
 ton!
 YOUNG COURTLY. Dear! Then I
 am dear to you; that word once more;
 say — say you love me!
 GRACE. Is this fair?
[He catches her in his arms, and
kisses her.
[Enter LADY GAY SPANKER]
 LADY GAY. Ha! oh!
 GRACE. Gay! destruction! *[Exit]*
 YOUNG COURTLY. Fizgig! The
 devil!
 LADY GAY. Don't mind me — pray,
 don't let me be any interruption!
 YOUNG COURTLY. I was just —
 LADY GAY. Yes, I see you were.
 YOUNG COURTLY. Oh! madam, how
 could you mar my bliss, in the very
 ecstasy of its fulfilment?
 LADY GAY. I always like to be in
 at the death. Never drop your ears;
 bless you, she is only a little fresh —
 give her her head, and she will outrun
 herself.
 YOUNG COURTLY. Possibly; but
 what am I to do?
 LADY GAY. Keep your seat.
 YOUNG COURTLY. But in a few days
 she will take a leap that must throw me
 — she marries Sir Harcourt Courtly.

LADY GAY. Why, that is awkward, certainly; but you can challenge him, and shoot him.

YOUNG COURTLY. Unfortunately, that is out of the question.

LADY GAY. How so?

YOUNG COURTLY. You will not betray a secret, if I inform you?

LADY GAY. All right — what is it?

YOUNG COURTLY. I am his son.

LADY GAY. What — his son? But he does not know you?

YOUNG COURTLY. No. I met him here, by chance, and faced it out. I never saw him before in my life.

LADY GAY. Beautiful! — I see it all — you're in love with your mother, that should be — your wife, that will be.

YOUNG COURTLY. Now, I think I could distance the old gentleman, if you will but lend us your assistance.

LADY GAY. I will, in anything.

YOUNG COURTLY. You must know, then, that my father, Sir Harcourt, has fallen desperately in love with you.

LADY GAY. With me! — [*Utters a scream of delight*] — That is delicious!

YOUNG COURTLY. Now, if you only could —

LADY GAY. Could! — I will. Ha! ha! I see my cue. I'll cross his scent — I'll draw him after me. Ho! ho! won't I make love to him? Ha!

YOUNG COURTLY. The only objection might be Mr. Spanker, who might —

LADY GAY. No, he mightn't, — he's no objection. Bless him, he's an estimable little character — you don't know him as well as I do. I dare say — ha! ha! [*Dinner-bell rings*] Here they come to dinner. I'll commence my operations on your Governor immediately. Ha! ha! how I shall enjoy it.

YOUNG COURTLY. Be guarded!

[*Enter MAX HARKAWAY, SIR HARCOURT, DAZZLE, GRACE, and SPANKER*]

MAX. Now, gentlemen — Sir Harcourt, do you lead Grace.

LADY GAY. I believe Sir Harcourt is engaged to me. [*Takes his arm*]

MAX. Well, please yourselves.

[*They file out, MAX first, YOUNG COURTLY and GRACE, SIR HARCOURT coquetting with LADY GAY, leaving DAZZLE, who offers his arm to SPANKER*]

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

SCENE FIRST. — *A handsome Drawing Room in Oak Hall, chandeliers, with books, drawings, etc. GRACE and LADY GAY discovered. SPANKER handing Coffee*

GRACE. If there be one habit abominable than another, it is that of the gentlemen sitting over their wine in that selfish, unfeeling fashion, and gross insult to our sex.

LADY GAY. We are turned out when the fun begins. How happy the poor wretches look at the contemplation of being rid of us.

GRACE. The conventional signal for the ladies to withdraw is anxiously and deliberately waited for.

LADY GAY. Then I begin to wonder what a man.

GRACE. The instant the door is closed upon us, there rises a roar!

LADY GAY. In celebration of short-lived liberty, my love; rejoice over their emancipation.

GRACE. I think it very insulting whatever it may be.

LADY GAY. Ah! my dear, philosophers say that man is the creature of an hour — it is the dinner hour, I suppose.

[*Loud noise. Cries of "A song!"*]

GRACE. I am afraid they are getting too pleasant to be agreeable.

LADY GAY. I hope the squire will not restrict himself; after his third bottle he becomes rather voluminous. [*Cries of "Silence!"*] Some one is going to jump! [*Jumps up*] Let us hear!

[*SPANKER is heard to cough*]

GRACE. Oh, no, Gay, for heaven's sake!

LADY GAY. Oho! ha! ha! that is my Dolly. [*At the conclusion of the verse*] Well, I never heard my husband sing before! Happy wretches, how they envy them!

[*Enter JAMES, with a note*]

JAMES. Mr. Hamilton has just called at the house for London.

GRACE. Impossible! — that is, I never saw him — that is —

LADY GAY. Ha! ha!

GRACE. He never — speak, sir!

JAMES. He left, Miss Grace, in a perate hurry, and this note, I believe, you. [*Presenting a note on a salver*]
 GRACE. For me!
 [*She is about to snatch it, but restraining herself, takes it coolly.*
Exit JAMES]

Reads "Your manner during dinner has me no alternative but instant departure; absence will release you from the oppression which my society must necessarily inflict upon your sensitive mind. It may tend also to other, though it can never extinguish, that indomitable passion, of which I am the alive victim. Dare I supplicate pardon and oblivion for the past? It is the last vest of the self-deceived, but still loving
 "AUGUSTUS HAMILTON."

[*Puts her hand to her forehead and appears giddy*]
 LADY GAY. Hallo, Grace! what's matter?

GRACE [*recovering herself*]. Nothing — the heat of the room.

LADY GAY. Oh! what excuse does make? particular unforeseen business, I suppose?

GRACE. Why, yes — a mere formula — a — you may put it in the fire.

[*She puts it in her bosom*]
 LADY GAY. [*Aside*] It is near enough to the fire where it is.

GRACE. I'm glad he's gone.

LADY GAY. So am I.

GRACE. He was a disagreeable, ignorant person.

LADY GAY. Yes; and so vulgar!

GRACE. No, he was not at all vulgar.

LADY GAY. I mean in appearance.

GRACE. Oh! how can you say so; was very *distingué*.

LADY GAY. Well, I might have been mistaken, but I took him for a forward, rusive —

GRACE. Good gracious, Gay! he was very retiring — even shy.

LADY GAY. [*Aside*] It's all right. He is in love, — blows hot and cold in the same breath.

GRACE. How can you be a competent judge? Why, you have not known him more than a few hours, — while I —

LADY GAY. Have known him two years and a quarter! I yield — I confess, I never was, or will be so intimate with him as you appeared to be! Ha!

[*Loud noise of argument. The folding-doors are thrown open*]

[*Enter the whole party of gentlemen apparently engaged in warm discussion. They assemble in knots, while the SERVANTS hand Coffee, etc., MAX, SIR HARCOURT, DAZZLE, and SPANKER, together*]

DAZZLE. But, my dear sir, consider the position of the two countries under such a constitution.

SIR HARCOURT. The two countries! What have they to do with the subject?

MAX. Everything. Look at their two legislative bodies.

SPANKER. Ay, look at their two legislative bodies.

SIR HARCOURT. Why, it would inevitably establish universal anarchy and confusion.

GRACE. I think they are pretty well established already.

SPANKER. Well, suppose it did, what has anarchy and confusion to do with the subject?

LADY GAY. Do look at my Dolly: he is arguing — talking politics — 'pon my life he is. [*Calling*] Mr. Spanker, my dear!

SPANKER. Excuse me, love, I am discussing a point of importance.

LADY GAY. Oh, that is delicious; he must discuss that to me. — [*She goes up and leads him down; he appears to have shaken off his gaucherie; she shakes her head*] Dolly! Dolly!

SPANKER. Pardon me, Lady Gay Spanker, I conceive your mutilation of my sponsorial appellation derogatory to my *amour propre*.

LADY GAY. Your what? Ho! ho!

SPANKER. And I particularly request that, for the future, I may not be treated with that cavalier spirit which does not become your sex, nor your station, your ladyship.

LADY GAY. You have been indulging till you have lost the little wit nature dribbled into your unfortunate little head — your brains want the whipper-in — you are not yourself.

SPANKER. Madam, I am doubly myself; and permit me to inform you, that unless you voluntarily pay obedience to my commands, I shall enforce them.

LADY GAY. Your commands!

SPANKER. Yes, madam; I mean to put a full stop to your hunting.

LADY GAY. You do! ah! [*Aside*] I can scarcely speak from delight. [*Aloud*] Who put such an idea into your

head, for I am sure it is not an original emanation of your genius?

SPANKER. Sir Harcourt Courtly, my friend; and now, mark me! I request, for your own sake, that I may not be compelled to assert my a — my authority, as your husband. I shall say no more than this — if you persist in this absurd rebellion —

LADY GAY. Well!

SPANKER. Contemplate a separation.

[*He looks at her haughtily, and retires*]

LADY GAY. Now I'm happy! My own little darling, inestimable Dolly, has tumbled into a spirit, somehow. Sir Harcourt, too! Ha! ha! he's trying to make him ill-treat me, so that his own suit may thrive.

SIR HARCOURT. [*Advances*] Lady Gay!

LADY GAY. Now for it.

SIR HARCOURT. What hours of misery were those I passed, when, by your secession, the room suffered a total eclipse.

LADY GAY. Ah! you flatter.

SIR HARCOURT. No, pardon me, that were impossible. No, believe me, I tried to join in the boisterous mirth, but my thoughts would desert to the drawing-room. Ah! how I envied the careless levity and cool indifference with which Mr. Spanker enjoyed your absence.

DAZZLE [*who is lounging in a chair*]. Max, that Madeira is worth its weight in gold; I hope you have more of it.

MAX. A pipe, I think.

DAZZLE. I consider a magnum of that nectar, and a meerschaum of kanaster, to consummate the ultimatum of all mundane bliss. To drown myself in liquid ecstasy, and then blow a cloud on which the enfranchised soul could soar above Olympus. — Oh!

[*Enter JAMES*]

JAMES. Mr. Charles Courtly!

SIR HARCOURT. Ah, now, Max, you must see a living apology for my conduct.

[*Enter YOUNG COURTLY, dressed very plainly*]

Well, Charles, how are you? Don't be afraid. There, Max, what do you say now?

MAX. Well, this is the most extraordinary likeness.

GRACE. [*Aside*] Yes — considering

it is the original. I am not so deceived!

MAX. Sir, I am delighted to see

YOUNG COURTLY. Thank you,

DAZZLE. Will you be kind enough to introduce me, Sir Harcourt?

SIR HARCOURT. This is Mr. Dazzle Charles.

YOUNG COURTLY. Which?

[*Looking from MR. SPANKER to DAZZLE*]

SIR HARCOURT. [*To LADY GAY*] not that refreshing? Miss Harkness — Charles, this is your mother, or rather will be.

YOUNG COURTLY. Madam, I love, honour, and obey you punctually

[*Takes out a book, sighs, and goes to reading*]

[*Enter JAMES*]

SIR HARCOURT. You perceive I am quite unused to society — perfectly ignorant of every conventional rule of life.

JAMES. The Doctor and the young ladies have arrived.

MAX. The young ladies — now must to the ball — I make it a rule always to commence the festivities with a good old country dance — a rattle. Sir Roger de Coverly; come, Sir Harcourt.

SIR HARCOURT. Does this antediluvian require a war-whoop in it?

MAX. Nothing but a nimble foot and a light heart.

SIR HARCOURT. Very antediluvian indispensables! Lady Gay Spanker will you honour me by becoming my preceptor?

LADY GAY. Why, I am engaged, but [*Aloud*] on such a plea as Sir Harcourt's, I must waive all obstacles.

MAX. Now, Grace, girl — give your hand to Mr. Courtly.

GRACE. Pray, excuse me, uncle, I have a headache.

SIR HARCOURT. [*Aside*] Jealous by the gods. — Jealous of my devotion at another's fane! [*Aloud*] Charles, my boy! amuse Miss Grace during my absence. [*Exit with LADY GAY*]

MAX. But don't you dance, Charles!

YOUNG COURTLY. Dance, sir! I never dance — I can procure exercise in a much more rational manner, and music disturbs my meditations.

MAX. Well, do the gallant.

YOUNG COURTLY. I never studied that Art — but I have a Prize Essay

rostatic subject, which would de-
her—for it enchanted the
erend Doctor Pump, of Corpus
sti.

GRACE. [*Aside*] What on earth
I have induced him to disguise him-
in that frightful way!—I rather
ect some plot to entrap me into a
ession.

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] Dare I
ess this trick to her? No! Not
I have proved her affection indis-
bly.—Let me see—I must con-
[*He takes a chair, and, forgetting*

assumed character, is about to take
natural free manner.—GRACE looks
trised.—*He turns abashed*] Madam,
ve been desired to amuse you.

GRACE. Thank you.

YOUNG COURTLY. “The labour we
ht in, physics pain.” I will draw
a moral, ahem! Subject, the
ts of inebriety!—which, accord-
to Ben Jonson—means perplexion
he intellects, caused by imbibing
tuous liquors.—About an hour
re my arrival, I passed an appalling
ence of the effects of this state—a
age was overthrown—horses killed
ntleman in a helpless state, with his
broken—all occasioned by the
ication of the post-boy.

GRACE. That is very amusing.

YOUNG COURTLY. I found it edifying
nutritious food for reflection—the
ring man desired his best compli-
ts to you.

GRACE. To me?

YOUNG COURTLY. Yes.

GRACE. His name was—

YOUNG COURTLY. Mr. Augustus
ilton.

GRACE. Augustus! Oh!

[*Affects to faint*]

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] Huzza!

GRACE. But where, sir, did this hap-
?

YOUNG COURTLY. About four miles
n the road.

GRACE. He must be conveyed here.

[*Enter SERVANT*]

SERVANT. Mr. Meddle, madam.

[*Enter MEDDLE*]

MEDDLE. On very particular busi-

GRACE. The very person. My dear

MEDDLE. My dear madam!

GRACE. You must execute a very

particular commission for me imme-
diately. Mr. Hamilton has met with a
frightful accident on the London road,
and is in a dying state.

MEDDLE. Well! I have no hesita-
tion in saying, he takes it uncommonly
easy—he looks as if he was used to it.

GRACE. You mistake: that is not
Mr. Hamilton, but Mr. Courtly, who
will explain everything, and conduct
you to the spot.

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] Oh! I
must put a stop to all this, or I shall
be found out.—[*Aloud*] Madam, that
were useless; for I omitted to mention a
small fact which occurred before I left
Mr. Hamilton—he died.

GRACE. Dear me! Oh, then we
needn't trouble you, Mr. Meddle.
[*Music heard*] Hark! I hear they are
commencing a waltz—if you will ask
me—perhaps your society and conver-
sation may tend to dispel the dreadful
sensation you have aroused.

YOUNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] Hears of
my death—screams out—and then
asks me to waltz! I am bewildered!
Can she suspect me? I wonder which
she likes best—me or my double?
Confound this disguise—I must retain
it—I have gone too far with my dad to
pull up now.—At your service, madam.

GRACE. [*Aside*] I will pay him well
for this trick!

[*Exeunt, all but MEDDLE*]

MEDDLE. Well, if that is not Mr.
Hamilton, scratch me out with a big
blade, for I am a blot—a mistake upon
the rolls. There is an error in the plead-
ings somewhere, and I will discover it.
I would swear to his identity before the
most discriminating jury. By the bye,
this accident will form a capital excuse
for my presence here. I just stepped
in to see how matters worked, and—
stay—here comes the bridegroom elect
—and, oh! in his very arms, Lady Gay
Spanker! [*Looks round*] Where are
my witnesses? Oh, that some one else
were here! However, I can retire and
get some information, eh—Spanker
versus Courtly—damages—witness.

[*Gets into an arm-chair, which he*
turns round]

[*Enter SIR HARCOURT, supporting*
LADY GAY]

SIR HARCOURT. This cool room will
recover you.

LADY GAY. Excuse my trusting to
you for support.

SIR HARCOURT. I am transported! Allow me thus ever to support this lovely burden, and I shall conceive that Paradise is regained. [*They sit*]

LADY GAY. Oh! Sir Harcourt, I feel very faint.

SIR HARCOURT. The waltz made you giddy.

LADY GAY. And I have left my salts in the other room.

SIR HARCOURT. I always carry a flacon, for the express accommodation of the fair sex.

[*Producing a smelling-bottle*]

LADY GAY. Thank you — ah! [*She sighs*]

SIR HARCOURT. What a sigh was there!

LADY GAY. The vapour of consuming grief.

SIR HARCOURT. Grief? Is it possible! Have you a grief? Are you unhappy? Dear me!

LADY GAY. Am I not married?

SIR HARCOURT. What a horrible state of existence!

LADY GAY. I am never contradicted, so there are none of those enlivening, interesting little differences, which so pleasingly diversify the monotony of conjugal life, like spots of verdure — no quarrels, like oases in the desert of matrimony — no rows.

SIR HARCOURT. How vulgar! what a brute!

LADY GAY. I never have anything but my own way; and he won't permit me to spend more than I like.

SIR HARCOURT. Mean-spirited wretch!

LADY GAY. How can I help being miserable?

SIR HARCOURT. Miserable! I wonder you are not in a lunatic asylum, with such unheard-of barbarity!

LADY GAY. But worse than all that!

SIR HARCOURT. Can it be out-heroded?

LADY GAY. Yes, I could forgive that — I do — it is my duty. But only imagine — picture to yourself, my dear Sir Harcourt, though I, the third daughter of an Earl, married him out of pity for his destitute and helpless situation as a bachelor with ten thousand a year — conceive, if you can — he actually permits me, with the most placid indifference, to flirt with any old fool I may meet.

SIR HARCOURT. Good gracious! miserable idiot!

LADY GAY. I fear there is incompatibility of temper, which renders a separation inevitable.

SIR HARCOURT. Indispensable dear madam! Ah! had I been happy possessor of such a realm of — what a beatific eternity unfolds to my extending imagination! another man but looked at you, I should have annihilated him at once; and had the temerity to speak, his life should have expiated his crime.

LADY GAY. Oh, an existence of a nature is too bright for the eye to think — too sweet to bear reflection.

SIR HARCOURT. My devotion eternal, deep —

LADY GAY. Oh, Sir Harcourt!

SIR HARCOURT [*more fervently*]. Your every thought should be a subject of study, — each wish forestalled by the quick apprehension of a kindred soul.

LADY GAY. Alas! how can I alter my fate?

SIR HARCOURT. If a life — a life — were offered to your astonished gaze by one who is considered the ideal of fashion — the vane of the *beau monde* — if you saw him at your feet, begging, beseeching your acceptance of all that he offers more than this, what would you answer —

LADY GAY. Ah! I know of no man so devoted!

SIR HARCOURT. You do! [*Throwing himself upon his knees*] Behold Sir Harcourt Courtly!

[*MEDDLE jumps up in the clouds*]

LADY GAY. [*Aside*] Ha! Yoicks! Puss has broken cover.

SIR HARCOURT. Speak, dearest Lady Gay! — speak — will you fly from the tyranny, the wretched misery of such a monster's roof, to accept the soul which lives but in your presence!

LADY GAY. Do not press me. I am but a spare a weak, yielding woman, contented to know that you are, and too dear to me. But the world — the world would say —

SIR HARCOURT. Let us be a party, to open a more extended liberal view of matrimonial advancement to society.

LADY GAY. How irresistible is your argument! Oh! pause!

SIR HARCOURT. I have ascertained for a fact, that every tradesman of respectability lives with his wife, and thus you see I have become a vulgar and plebeian custom.

BY GAY. Leave me; I feel I can withstand your powers of persuasion. Swear that you will never forsake me.

HARCOURT. Dictate the oath. [grow wrinkled, — may two inches added to the circumference of my — may I lose the fall in my back, — may I be old and ugly the instant I lose one tithe of adoration!

BY GAY. I must believe you.

HARCOURT. Shall we leave this horrible spot — this horrible vicinity? BY GAY. The sooner the better: to-morrow evening let it be. Now let me return; my absence will be rewarded. [He kisses her hand] Do I not see you confused? Has my agitation rendered me unfit to enter the room?

HARCOURT. More angelic by a shade of heightened colour.

BY GAY. To-morrow, in this garden which opens on the lawn.

HARCOURT. At eleven o'clock.

BY GAY. Have your carriage in waiting, and four horses. Remember, be particular to have four; don't let the affair come off shabbily. Adieu, Sir Harcourt! [Exit]

HARCOURT. Veni, vidi, vici! Caesar, Cæsar, Napoleon, Alexander never completed so fair a conquest in so short a time. She dropped fastidiously. This is an unprecedented example of the irresistible force of personal appearance combined with political address. Poor creature! how she deceived me! I pity so prostrating a passion and ought to return it. I will; it is my duty I owe to society and fashion.

[Exit] MEDDLE. [Turns the chair round] There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. This is my tide — I am the witness. "Virtue is sure to find its reward." But I've no time to contemplate what I shall be — something huge. Let me see — Spanker Courtly — Crim. Con. — Damned at 150,000*l.*, at least, for always decimate your hopes.

[Enter Mr. SPANKER]

SPANKER. I cannot find Gay any-

MEDDLE. The plaintiff himself — I will commence the action. Mr. Spanker, as I have information of deep importance to impart, will you sit down? [They sit solemnly. MED-

DLE takes out a note-book and pencil] Ahem! You have a wife?

[Re-enter LADY GAY behind]

SPANKER. Yes, I believe I —

MEDDLE. Will you be kind enough, without any prevarication, to answer my questions?

SPANKER. You alarm — I —

MEDDLE. Compose yourself and reserve your feelings; take time to consider. You have a wife?

SPANKER. Yes —

MEDDLE. He has a wife — good — a bona-fide wife — bound morally and legally to be your wife, and nobody else's in effect, except on your written permission —

SPANKER. But what has this —

MEDDLE. Hush! allow me, my dear sir, to congratulate you.

[Shakes his hand]

SPANKER. What for?

MEDDLE. Lady Gay Spanker is about to dishonour the bond of wedlock by eloping from you.

SPANKER [startling]. What?

MEDDLE. Be patient — I thought you would be overjoyed. Will you place the affair in my hands, and I will venture to promise the largest damages on record.

SPANKER. Damn the damages! — I want my wife. Oh, I'll go and ask her not to run away. She may run away with me — she may hunt — she may ride — anything she likes. Oh, sir, let us put a stop to this affair.

MEDDLE. Put a stop to it! do not alarm me, sir. Sir, you will spoil the most exquisite brief that was ever penned. It must proceed — it shall proceed. It is illegal to prevent it, and I will bring an action against you for wilful intent to injure the profession.

SPANKER. Oh, what an ass I am! Oh, I have driven her to this. It was all that damned brandy punch on the top of Burgundy. What a fool I was!

MEDDLE. It was the happiest moment of your life.

SPANKER. So I thought at the time; but we live to grow wiser. Tell me, who is the vile seducer?

MEDDLE. Sir Harcourt Courtly.

SPANKER. Ha! he is my best friend.

MEDDLE. I should think he is. If you will accompany me — here is a verbatim copy of the whole transaction in short-hand — sworn to by me.

SPANKER. Only let me have Gay back again.

MEDDLE. Even that may be arranged:—this way.

SPANKER. That ever I should live to see my wife run away. Oh, I will do any thing—keep two packs of hounds—buy up every horse and ass in England—myself included—oh!

[Exit with MEDDLE]

LADY GAY. Ha! ha! ha! Poor Dolly! I'm sorry I must continue to deceive him. If he would kindle up a little—So, that fellow overheard all—well, so much the better.

[Enter YOUNG COURTLY]

YOUNG COURTLY. My dear madam, how fares the plot? does my Governor nibble?

LADY GAY. Nibble! he is caught, and in the basket. I have just left him with a hook in his gills, panting for very lack of element. But how goes on your encounter?

YOUNG COURTLY. Bravely. By a simple ruse, I have discovered that she loves me. I see but one chance against the best termination I could hope.

LADY GAY. What is that?

YOUNG COURTLY. My father has told me that I return to town again to-morrow afternoon.

LADY GAY. Well, I insist you stop and dine—keep out of the way.

YOUNG COURTLY. Oh, but what excuse shall I offer for disobedience? What can I say when he sees me before dinner?

LADY GAY. Say—say Grace.

[Enter GRACE, who gets behind the window curtains]

YOUNG COURTLY. Ha! ha!

LADY GAY. I have arranged to elope with Sir Harcourt myself to-morrow night.

YOUNG COURTLY. The deuce you have!

LADY GAY. Now, if you could persuade Grace to follow that example—his carriage will be waiting at the Park—be there a little before eleven, and it will just prevent our escape. Can you make her agree to that?

YOUNG COURTLY. Oh, without the slightest difficulty, if Mr. Augustus Hamilton supplicates.

LADY GAY. Success attend you.
[Going]

YOUNG COURTLY. I will ben
haughty Grace.

LADY GAY. Do. [Exeunt sev
GRACE. Will you?

END OF ACT IV

ACT V

SCENE FIRST.—A Drawing-Room
Oak Hall

[Enter COOL]

COOL. This is the most serious Sir Harcourt has ever been engaged in. I took the liberty of considering a fool when he told me he was going to marry: but voluntarily to incur another man's incumbrance is very short of madness. If he continues to conduct himself in this absurd manner, I shall be compelled to dismiss him.

[Enter SIR HARCOURT, equipped for travelling]

SIR HARCOURT. Cool!

COOL. Sir Harcourt.

SIR HARCOURT. Is my carriage waiting?

COOL. For the last half hour a park wicket. But, pardon the expression, sir; would it not be more advisable to hesitate a little for a short time before you undertake the responsibility of a woman?

SIR HARCOURT. No: hesitation destroys the romance of a *faux pas*—reduces it to the level of a mere cantile calculation.

COOL. What is to be done with Charles?

SIR HARCOURT. Ay, much as my will, Lady Gay prevailed on me to permit him to remain. You, Cool, return him to college. Pass through London, and deliver these papers: is a small notice of the coming elope for the *Morning Post*; this, by authority, for the *Herald*; this, with the particulars, for the *Chronicle*; the full and circumstantial account for the evening journals—after we meet us at Boulogne.

COOL. Very good, Sir Harcourt

SIR HARCOURT. Lose no time. member—Hotel Anglais, Boulevard sur-Mer. And, Cool, bring a few of your friends with you, and don't forget to distribute some amongst very particular friends.

OL. It shall be done.

[Exit COOL]

SIR HARCOURT. With what indifference does a man of the world view the approach of the most perilous catastrophe! My position, hazardous as it entails none of that nervous excitement which a neophyte in the school of passion would feel. I am as cool and as composed as possible. Habit, habit! Oh! many roses will fade upon the altar of beauty, when the defalcation of Sir Harcourt Courtly is whispered — hinted — at last, confirmed and established. I think I see them. Then, on their return, they will not dare to eject me from my throne! I am their sovereign! Whoever attempts to think of treason, I'll banish him from the West End — I'll cut him out and put him out of fashion!

[Enter LADY GAY]

LADY GAY. Sir Harcourt!
SIR HARCOURT. At your feet.
LADY GAY. I had hoped you would be repented.
SIR HARCOURT. Repented!
LADY GAY. Have you not come to me as a jest? — say you have!
SIR HARCOURT. Love is too sacred a thing to be trifled with. Come, let us see. I have procured disguises —
LADY GAY. My courage begins to return. Let me return.
SIR HARCOURT. Impossible!
LADY GAY. Where do you intend to go?
SIR HARCOURT. You shall be my carriage. The carriage waits.
LADY GAY. You will never desert me.
SIR HARCOURT. Desert! Oh, heaven! Nay, do not hesitate — flight, alone is left to your desperate situation. Come, every moment is laden with danger. [They are going]
LADY GAY. Oh! gracious!
SIR HARCOURT. Hush! what is it?
LADY GAY. I have forgotten — I must return.
SIR HARCOURT. Impossible!
LADY GAY. I must! I must! I left Max — a pet staghound, in his kennel — without whom, life would be insupportable — I could not exist!
SIR HARCOURT. No, no. Let him stay after us in a hamper.
LADY GAY. In a hamper! Reckless man! Go — you love me. How would you like to be sent home — in a hamper? Let me fetch

him. Hark! I hear him squeal! Oh! Max — Max!

SIR HARCOURT. Hush! for heaven's sake. They'll imagine you're calling the Squire. I hear footsteps; where can I retire?

[Enter MEDDLE, SPANKER, DAZZLE, and MAX. LADY GAY screams]

MEDDLE. Spanker *versus* Courtly! — I subpoena every one of you as witnesses! — I have 'em ready — here they are — shilling a-piece.

[Giving them round]

LADY GAY. Where is Sir Harcourt?

MEDDLE. There! — bear witness! — call on the vile delinquent for protection!

SPANKER. Oh! his protection!

LADY GAY. What? ha!

MEDDLE. I'll swear I overheard the whole elopement planned — before any jury! — where's the book?

SPANKER. Do you hear, you profligate?

LADY GAY. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

DAZZLE. But where is this wretched Lothario?

MEDDLE. Ay, where is the defendant?

SPANKER. Where lies the hoary villain?

LADY GAY. What villain?

SPANKER. That will not serve you! — I'll not be blinded that way!

MEDDLE. We won't be blinded any way!

MAX. I must seek Sir Harcourt, and demand an explanation! Such a thing never occurred in Oak Hall before! — It must be cleared up! [Exit]

MEDDLE. [Aside to SPANKER] Now, take my advice; remember your gender. Mind the notes I have given you.

SPANKER. [Aside] All right! Here they are! Now, madam, I have procured the highest legal opinion on this point.

MEDDLE. Hear! hear!

SPANKER. And the question resolves itself into a — into — What's this?

[Looks at notes]

MEDDLE. A nutshell!

SPANKER. Yes, we are in a nutshell. Will you, in every respect, subscribe to my requests — desires — commands — [Looks at notes] — orders — imperative — indicative — injunctive — or otherwise?

LADY GAY. [Aside] 'Pon my life, he's actually going to assume the ribbons, and take the box-seat. I must put a stop to this. I will! It will all

end in smoke. I know Sir Harcourt would rather run than fight!

DAZZLE. Oh! I smell powder! — command my services. My dear madam, can I be of any use?

SPANKER. Oh! a challenge! — I must consult my legal adviser.

MEDDLE. No! impossible!

DAZZLE. Pooh! the easiest thing in life! Leave it to me: What has an attorney to do with affairs of honour? — they are out of his element.

MEDDLE. Compromise the question! Pull his nose! — we have no objection to that.

DAZZLE [turning to LADY GAY]. Well, we have no objection either — have we?

LADY GAY. No! — pull his nose — that will be something.

MEDDLE. And, moreover, it is not exactly actionable!

DAZZLE. Isn't it! — thank you — I'll note down that piece of information — it may be useful.

MEDDLE. How! cheated out of my legal knowledge.

LADY GAY. Mr. Spanker, I am determined! — I insist upon a challenge being sent to Sir Harcourt Courtly! — and — mark me — if you refuse to fight him — I will.

MEDDLE. Don't. Take my advice — you'll incapacit —

LADY GAY. Look you, Mr. Meddle, unless you wish me to horsewhip you, hold your tongue.

MEDDLE. What a she-tiger — I shall retire and collect my costs. [Exit]

LADY GAY. Mr. Spanker, oblige me by writing as I dictate.

SPANKER. He's gone — and now I am defenceless! Is this the fate of husbands? — A duel! — Is this the result of becoming master of my own family?

LADY GAY. "Sir, the situation in which you were discovered with my wife, admits neither of explanation nor apology."

SPANKER. Oh, yes! but it does — I don't believe you really intended to run quite away.

LADY GAY. You do not; but I know better, I say I did! and if it had not been for your unfortunate interruption, I do not know where I might have been by this time. Go on.

SPANKER. "Nor apology." I'm writing my own death-warrant, — committing suicide on compulsion.

LADY GAY. "The bearer will arrange all preliminary matters: another day must see this satisfied and expiated by your life, or that of —"

"Yours very sincerely,

"Dolly Spanker"

Now, Mr. Dazzle.

[Gives it over his

DAZZLE. The document is as if it were a hundred-pound bill.

LADY GAY. We trust to your discretion.

SPANKER. His discretion! Or your head in a tiger's mouth, and to his discretion!

DAZZLE [sealing letter, etc., SPANKER'S seal]. My dear Lady, matters of this kind are indigenous to my nature, independently of the vading fascination to all humanity; this is more especially delightful, may perceive I shall be the intimate bosom friend of both parties.

LADY GAY. Is it not the only native in such a case?

DAZZLE. It is a beautiful panacea in every case. [Going — returns]. By the way, where would you like a party of pleasure to come off? Of shooting is pleasant enough, but might venture to advise, we could half a dozen of that Madeira and of cigars into the billiard-room, so a night of it; take up the irons now and then; string for first shot blaze away at one another in an amiable and gentlemanlike way; so cool the matter before the potency of liquor could disturb the individual the object, or the smoke of the powder render the outline dubious. Does an arrangement coincide with your views?

LADY GAY. Perfectly.

DAZZLE. I trust shortly to be a harbinger of happy tidings.

SPANKER [coming forward]. Gay Spanker, are you ambitious of coming a widow?

LADY GAY. Why, Dolly, would I at best but weak, and weeds become

SPANKER. Female! am I to be molated on the altar of your vanity?

LADY GAY. If you become pained I shall laugh.

SPANKER. Farewell — base, less, unfeeling woman!

LADY GAY. Ha! well, so I am heartless, for he is a dear, good fellow, and I ought not to play upon feelings: but 'pon my life he sou

up at concert pitch, that I feel disinclined to untune him. Poor Dolly, I don't think he cared so much about me. I'll put him out of pain.

[*Exit.* SIR HARCOURT comes down]
SIR HARCOURT. I have been a fool! dupe to my own vanity. I shall be intimated at as a ridiculous old coxcomb — and so I am. The hour of conviction is arrived. Have I deceived myself? — Have I turned all my senses backward — looking towards self — always self? — and has the world been ever laughing at me? Well, if they have, I will revert the joke; — they may say I am an old ass; but I will prove that I am neither too old to repent nor so folly, nor such an ass as to flinch from confessing it. A blow half met is at half felt.

[*Enter DAZZLE*]

DAZZLE. Sir Harcourt, may I be permitted the honour of a few minutes' conversation with you?

SIR HARCOURT. With pleasure.

DAZZLE. Have the kindness to throw your eye over that. [*Gives the letter*]

SIR HARCOURT [*reads*]. "Situation of my wife — apology — expiate — my error." Why, this is intended for a challenge.

DAZZLE. Why, indeed, I am perfectly aware that it is not quite *en règle* — the couching, for with that I had nothing to do; but I trust that the regularity of the composition will be unfounded in the beauty of the subject. SIR HARCOURT. Mr. Dazzle, are you earnest?

DAZZLE. Sir Harcourt Courtly, upon my honour I am, and I hope that no previous engagement will interfere with an immediate reply *in propria persona*. We have fixed upon the billiard-room as the scene of action, which I have just been properly illuminated in honour of the occasion; and, by-the-bye, if your complements are not handy, I can oblige you with a pair of the sweetest things you ever handled — hair-triggered — jaw grip; heir-looms in my family. I regard them almost in the light of relations.

SIR HARCOURT. Sir, I shall avail myself of one of your relatives. [*Aside*] One of the hereditaments of my folly — I must accept it. [*Aloud*] Sir, I shall be happy to meet Mr. Spanker at any time or place he may appoint.

DAZZLE. The sooner the better, sir.

Allow me to offer you my arm. I see you understand these matters; — my friend Spanker is wofully ignorant — miserably uneducated. [*Exeunt*]

[*Re-enter MAX, with GRACE*]

MAX. Give ye joy, girl, give ye joy. Sir Harcourt Courtly must consent to waive all title to your hand in favour of his son Charles.

GRACE. Oh, indeed! Is that the pith of your congratulation — humph! the exchange of an old fool for a young one? Pardon me if I am not able to distinguish the advantage.

MAX. Advantage!

GRACE. Moreover, by what right am I a transferable cipher in the family of Courtly? So, then, my fate is reduced to this, to sacrifice my fortune, or unite myself with a worm-eaten edition of the Classics!

MAX. Why, he certainly is not such a fellow as I could have chosen for my little Grace; but consider, to retain fifteen thousand a-year! Now, tell me honestly — but why should I say honestly? Speak, girl, would you rather not have the lad?

GRACE. Why do you ask me?

MAX. Why, look ye, I'm an old fellow; another hunting season or two, and I shall be in at my own death — I can't leave you this house and land, because they are entailed, nor can I say I'm sorry for it, for it is a good law; but I have a little box with my Grace's name upon it, where, since your father's death and miserly will, I have yearly placed a certain sum to be yours, should you refuse to fulfil the conditions prescribed.

GRACE. My own dear uncle!

[*Clasping him round the neck*]

MAX. Pooh! pooh! what's to do now? Why, it was only a trifle — why, you little rogue, what are you crying about?

GRACE. Nothing, but —

MAX. But what? Come, out with it: Will you have young Courtly?

[*Re-enter LADY GAY*]

LADY GAY. Oh! Max, Max!

MAX. Why, what's amiss with you?

LADY GAY. I'm a wicked woman!

MAX. What have you done?

LADY GAY. Everything — oh, I thought Sir Harcourt was a coward, but now I find a man may be a coxcomb without being a poltroon. Just to show my husband how inconvenient it is to

hold the ribands sometimes, I made him send a challenge to the old fellow, and he, to my surprise, accepted it, and is going to blow my Dolly's brains out in the billiard-room.

MAX. The devil!

LADY GAY. Just when I imagined I had got my whip hand of him again, out comes my lynch-pin — and over I go — oh!

MAX. I will soon put a stop to that — a duel under my roof! Murder in Oak Hall! I'll shoot them both!

[Exit]

GRACE. Are you really in earnest?

LADY GAY. Do you think it looks like a joke? Oh! Dolly, if you allow yourself to be shot, I will never forgive you — never! Ah, he is a great fool, Grace! but I can't tell why, but I would sooner lose my bridle hand than he should be hurt on my account.

[Enter SIR HARCOURT COURTLY]

Tell me — tell me — have you shot him — is he dead — my dear Sir Harcourt? You horrid old brute — have you killed him? I shall never forgive myself.

[Exit]

GRACE. Oh! Sir Harcourt, what has happened?

SIR HARCOURT. Don't be alarmed, I beg — your uncle interrupted us — discharged the weapons — locked the challenger up in the billiard-room to cool his rage.

GRACE. Thank heaven!

SIR HARCOURT. Miss Grace, to apologise for my conduct were useless, more especially as I am confident that no feelings of indignation or sorrow for my late acts are cherished by you; but still, reparation is in my power, and I not only waive all title, right, or claim to your person or your fortune, but freely admit your power to bestow them on a more worthy object.

GRACE. This generosity, Sir Harcourt, is most unexpected.

SIR HARCOURT. No, not generosity, but simply justice, justice!

GRACE. May I still beg a favour?

SIR HARCOURT. Claim anything that is mine to grant.

GRACE. You have been duped by Lady Gay Spanker, I have also been cheated and played upon by her and Mr. Hamilton — may I beg that the contract between us may, to all appearances, be still held good?

SIR HARCOURT. Certainly, although

I confess I cannot see the point of purpose.

[Enter MAX, with YOUNG COURTLY]

MAX. Now, Grace, I have brought the lad.

GRACE. Thank you, uncle, but your trouble was quite unnecessary. Harcourt holds to his original colour.

MAX. The deuce he does!

GRACE. And I am willing — eager, to become Lady Courtly.

YOUNG COURTLY. [Aside] Deuce you are!

MAX. But, Sir Harcourt —

SIR HARCOURT. One word, Madam, an instant.

[They exit]

YOUNG COURTLY. [Aside] Can this mean? Can it be possible I have been mistaken — that she is in love with Augustus Hamilton?

GRACE. Now we shall find how intends to bend the haughty Grace.

YOUNG COURTLY. Madam — I mean, — are you really in love with your father?

GRACE. No, indeed I am not.

YOUNG COURTLY. Are you in love with any one else?

GRACE. No, or I should not be here.

YOUNG COURTLY. Then you accept him as your real husband?

GRACE. In the common acceptance of the word.

YOUNG COURTLY. [Aside] How can I have not been a pretty fool! [Aloud] Why do you marry him, if you don't love him?

GRACE. To save my fortune.

YOUNG COURTLY. [Aside] A cold, cold, cold-hearted girl! [Aloud] If there be any one you love in the world — marry him; — were you never in love?

GRACE. Never!

YOUNG COURTLY. [Aside] What an ass I've been! [Aloud] I heard Lady Gay mention something about a Mr. Hamilton.

GRACE. Ah, yes, a person who, in the acquaintanceship of two days, has the assurance to make love to me!

YOUNG COURTLY. Yes, — yes, — Well?

GRACE. I pretended to receive his attentions.

YOUNG COURTLY. [Aside] It was the best pretence I ever saw.

GRACE. An absurd, vain, conceit.

mb, who appeared to imagine that so struck with his fulsome speech, he could turn me round his finger.

UNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] My very

hts!

ACE. But he was mistaken.

UNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] Con-

edly! [*Aloud*] Yet you seemed

concerned about the news of his

?

ACE. His accident! No, but—

UNG COURTLY. But what?

UNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] What can I say?

ACE. Ah! but my maid Pert's

er is a post-boy, and I thought he

have sustained an injury, poor

UNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] Damn

post-boy! [*Aloud*] Madam, if the

ion of your fortune be the plea on

you are about to bestow your

on one you do not love, and whose

actions speak his carelessness for

nestimable jewel he is incapable

appreciating—Know that I am

edly, madly attached to you.

ACE. You, sir? Impossible!

UNG COURTLY. Not at all,—

inevitable,—I have been so for a

ime.

ACE. Why, you never saw me till

light.

UNG COURTLY. I have seen you in

nation—you are the ideal I have

ipped.

ACE. Since you press me into a

sion,—which nothing but this

bring me to speak,—know, I did

poor Augustus Hamilton—

Enter MAX and SIR HARCOURT]

he—he is—no—more! Pray,

me, sir.

UNG COURTLY. [*Aside*] She

me! And, oh! what a situation

in!—if I own I am the man, my

nor will overhear, and ruin me—

o not, she'll marry him.—What is

done?

[Enter LADY GAY]

Y GAY. Where have you put

Dolly? I have been racing all

the house—tell me, is he quite

x. I'll have him brought in.

[Exit]

HARCOURT. My dear madam,

must perceive this unfortunate

rence was no fault of mine. I was

alled to act as I have done—I

was willing to offer any apology, but that resource was excluded, as unacceptable.

LADY GAY. I know—I know—'twas I made with him that letter—there was no apology required—'twas I that apparently seduced you from the paths of propriety,—'twas all a joke, and here is the end of it.

[Enter MAX, MR. SPANKER, and DAZZLE]

Oh! if he had but lived to say, "I forgive you, Gay!"

SPANKER. So I do!

LADY GAY [*seeing him*]. Ah! he is alive!

SPANKER. Of course I am!

LADY GAY. Ha! ha! ha! [*Embraces him*] I will never hunt again—unless you wish it. Sell your stable—

SPANKER. No, no—do what you like—say what you like for the future! I find the head of a family has less ease and more responsibility than I, as a member, could have anticipated. I abdicate!

[Enter COOL]

SIR HARCOURT. Ah! Cool, here! [*Aside to COOL*] You may destroy those papers—I have altered my mind,—and I do not intend to elope at present. Where are they?

COOL. As you seemed particular, Sir Harcourt, I sent them off by mail to London.

SIR HARCOURT. Why, then, a full description of the whole affair will be published to-morrow.

COOL. Most irretrievably!

SIR HARCOURT. You must post to town immediately, and stop the press.

COOL. Beg pardon—they would see me hanged first, Sir Harcourt; they don't frequently meet with such a profitable lie.

SERVANT. [*Without*] No, sir! no, sir!

[Enter SIMPSON]

SIMPSON. Sir, there is a gentleman, who calls himself Mr. Solomon Isaacs, insists upon following me up.

[Enter MR. SOLOMON ISAACS]

ISAACS. Mr. Courtly, you will excuse my performance of a most disagreeable duty at any time, but more especially in such a manner. I must beg the honour of your company to town.

SIR HARCOURT. What! — how! — what for?

ISAACS. For debt, Sir Harcourt.

SIR HARCOURT. Arrested? — impossible! Here must be some mistake.

ISAACS. Not the slightest, sir. Judgment has been given in five cases, for the last three months; but Mr. Courtly is an eel rather too nimble for my men. — We have been on his track, and traced him down to this village, with Mr. Dazzle.

DAZZLE. Ah! Isaacs! how are you?

ISAACS. Thank you, sir.

[Speaks to SIR HARCOURT]

MAX. Do you know him?

DAZZLE. Oh, intimately! Distantly related to his family — same arms on our escutcheon — empty purse falling through a hole in a — pocket: motto, "Requiescat in pace" — which means, "Let virtue be its own reward."

SIR HARCOURT [To ISAACS]. Oh, I thought there was a mistake! Know, to your misfortune, that Mr. Hamilton was the person you dogged to Oak Hall, between whom and my son a most remarkable likeness exists.

ISAACS. Ha! ha! Know, to your misfortune, Sir Harcourt, that Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Courtly are one and the same person!

SIR HARCOURT. Charles!

YOUNG COURTLY. Concealment is in vain — I am Augustus Hamilton.

SIR HARCOURT. Hang me, if I didn't think it all along! Oh, you infernal, cozening dog!

ISAACS. Now, then, Mr. Hamilton —

GRACE. Stay, sir — Mr. Charles Courtly is under age — ask his father.

SIR HARCOURT. Ahem! — I won't — I won't pay a shilling of the rascal's debts — not a sixpence!

GRACE. Then, I will — you may retire. [Exit ISAACS]

YOUNG COURTLY. I can now perceive the generous point of your conduct towards me; and, believe me, I appreciate, and will endeavour to deserve it.

MAX. Ha! ha! Come, Sir Harcourt, you have been fairly beaten — you must forgive him — say you will.

SIR HARCOURT. So, sir, it appears you have been leading, covertly, an infernal town life?

YOUNG COURTLY. Yes, please, father.

[Imitating MASTER CHARLES]

SIR HARCOURT. None of your humbug sir! [Aside] He is my own son — how could I expect him to keep out of

the fire? [Aloud] And you, Mr. — have you been deceiving me?

COOL. Oh! Sir Harcourt, if perception was played upon, how I be expected to see?

SIR HARCOURT. Well, it would be useless to withhold my hand.

boy! [He gives his hand to YOUNG COURTLY. GRACE comes down on other side, and offers her hand; he takes it] What is all this? What do you want?

YOUNG COURTLY. Your blessing, father.

GRACE. If you please, father.

SIR HARCOURT. Oh! the matter is being solved. So, so, you scoundrel, you have been making love under the rose.

LADY GAY. He learnt that from Sir Harcourt.

SIR HARCOURT. Ahem! What would you do now, if I were to withhold my consent?

GRACE. Do without it.

MAX. The will says, if Grace marries any one but you, — her property goes to your heir-apparent — and that stands.

LADY GAY. Make virtue of necessity.

SPANKER. I married from inclination; and see how happy I am. ever I have a son —

LADY GAY. Hush! Dolly, dear!

SIR HARCOURT. Well! take care, boy! Although you are too young to marry. [They retire with GRACE]

LADY GAY. Am I forgiven, Sir Harcourt?

SIR HARCOURT. Ahem! What? — [Aside] Have you really deceived me?

LADY GAY. Can you not see that I am?

SIR HARCOURT. And you still love me?

LADY GAY. As much as I ever.

SIR HARCOURT [is about to take her hand, when SPANKER interposes between them]. A very handsome ring, indeed.

SPANKER. Very.

[Puts her arm in his, and they retire]

SIR HARCOURT. Poor little Sp

MAX [coming down, aside to SIR HARCOURT]. One point I wish to be settled. Who is Mr. Dazzle?

SIR HARCOURT. A relative of Spankers, he told me.

MAX. Oh, no, a near connexion of yours.

SIR HARCOURT. Never saw him
e I came down here, in all my life.
[YOUNG COURTLY] Charles, who is
Dazzle?

YOUNG COURTLY. Dazzle, Dazzle, —
you excuse an impertinent question?
it who the deuce are you?

DAZZLE. Certainly. I have not the
test idea.

L. How, sir?

DAZZLE. Simple question as you may
it, it would puzzle half the world
answer. One thing I can vouch —
re made me a gentleman — that is,
e on the best that can be procured
credit. I never spend my own
y when I can oblige a friend. I'm
ys thick on the winning horse. I'm
bidemic on the trade of a tailor.
further particulars, inquire of any
g magistrate.

SIR HARCOURT. And these are the
deeds which attest your title to the
name of gentleman? I perceive that
you have caught the infection of the
present age. Charles, permit me, as
your father, and you, sir, as his friend,
to correct you on one point. Bare-
faced assurance is the vulgar substitute
for gentlemanly ease; and there are
many who, by aping the *vices* of the
great, imagine that they elevate them-
selves to the rank of those, whose faults
alone they copy. No, sir! The title of
gentleman is the only one *out* of any
monarch's gift, yet within the reach of
every peasant. It should be engrossed
by *Truth* — stamped with *Honour* —
sealed with *good-feeling* — signed *Man*
— and enrolled in every true young
English heart.

THE END

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

A TRAGEDY

(1843)

By ROBERT BROWNING

ROBERT BROWNING

(1812-1889)

The career of Robert Browning, as a dramatist, is so indissolubly connected with the energies and activities of Macready, that this aspect of his art may very readily be viewed separately from the bulk of his work as a poet. But an understanding of the characteristics which mark Browning as a dramatist is more fully reached when one has formed a clear idea of his style and manner as a poet.

Dramatic technique is not characterized or dominated by the contemplative

It does not lend itself to any involved thought or to over-fine moral distinctions. It must be direct, always forward-moving, and as active in an external sense as it is active in an internal sense.

Browning, the poet, is marked by closeness of thought, by a certain type of poetic exposition which lent itself not to an interplay of character against character so much as to an interplay of emotion against emotion in a single individual.

The consequence is, one finds his "Dramatic Lyrics", "Romances", and "Men and Women", together with his wonderful collection of monologues in "Men and Women", rich in the elements from which great drama might be evolved. They are rich in imaginative quality, in many-sided understanding of character, in interplay of emotion and in effectiveness of situation. They indicate a dominant tendency on the part of the poet to deal with unusual thought in an unusual manner — to convey, by means of a line, some odd bit of information, or to laud, in an epigram, a life philosophy of some obscure scholar, artist, or ecclesiastic. Browning's thought, in all of his poetry, is compact, — so compact, indeed, that there is no confusion in its very quickness of transition from point to point. This compactness was not wholly a habit of mind, but it became a habit of expression, and a habit of Browning, though he may find small comfort in the compliment, must understand that much of the difficulty in comprehending Browning is due to the poet's belief that his reader knew quite as much as he did.

One might say, therefore, before examining the dramas of Robert Browning, that the little bit of the poet would meet with many disfavours on the stage. His genius, as a dramatist, was not dramatic in the sense of the theatre, and one has only to read the opening discussions in "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon'", or in "Colombe's Error", to note what the difficulty would be in the way of stage presentation. He has crept into most of his work those splendid lyric touches — like inserted odes — such as one finds in the third scene of the first act of "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon'" — a lyrical quality which, at its best, is remarkable and is fraught with even more beauty of thought than is to be found in the best of Tennyson.

It is not necessary for us to record fully the life of Robert Browning. He was born on May 7, 1812, in the parish of St. Giles, Camberwell, London, and he died at Palazzo Rezzonico, the Grand Canal, Venice, December 12, 1889. Readers may consult Sutherland Orr's "Life" and "Handbook", and of Gilbert Chesterton's

very brilliant contribution to the *English Men of Letters Series* will be placed conveniently in touch with the mere events of his career. In addition to which, a commendable edition of some of the Browning dramas, edited by Arlo Bates and published in the *Belles Lettres Series* (D. C. Heath & Co.), will give the student an excellent preparation for a consideration of Browning's dramatic work.

It is only necessary for me to say here that his career as a dramatist began about 1837, when, having made the acquaintance of Macready, he wrote "*Strafford*" for that actor, and dedicated the book to him when it was published in London the same year.

The play was acted for the first time at Covent Garden Theatre, on March 18, 1837, with Mr. Macready as *Strafford* and Miss Helen Faucit as *Lady Carlyle*. It was followed, in 1841, by "*Pippa Passes*", dedicated to Sargeant Talfourd, himself a dramatist of some note. And this drama, a series of lyrical experiences in the form of a very appealing character, stands to-day as an effective example of Browning at his simplest and most lyrical height.

In 1842, "*King Victor and King Charles*", a tragedy, was published, followed in 1843, by "*The Return of the Druses*", another tragedy, and "*A Blot in 'Scutcheon*", which has been selected for inclusion in the present volume.

The recorded stage history of this latter play is fully revealed in the Browning commentaries and in the Macready diaries. The first mention made by the poet was on January 25, 1843, when he had evidently received the manuscript, and spent several days in careful consideration of its merits. On the twenty-eighth he went to the Drury Lane Theatre and heard from Wilmot, who had read "*A Blot in 'Scutcheon*" to the company; he reported that they had laughed at it, and that Anderson had joked about it. On the twenty-ninth, Browning called on Macready and was told of the company's attitude, and Macready advised him to alter the second act. On the thirty-first, when the actor went to Drury Lane, according to his diary, he found Browning waiting for him in a state of great excitement:

He abused the door-keeper and was in a very great passion. I calmly apologized for having detained him, observing that I had made a great effort to meet him at all. He had not given his *name* to the door-keeper, who had told him he might walk into the green-room; but his dignity was mortally wounded. I fear he is a very conceited man. Went over his play with him and then looked over part of it.

On February 1, Macready was still reading the Browning text and making notes. He notes:

Serle called, and I told him of my inability to meet my work — that I could not play this part of Browning's unless the whole work of the theatre stopped. He thought that I thought it best to reduce it to its proper form — three acts, and let Phelps do it on all accounts. He concurred with me.

On February 4, rehearsals began, but, by the sixth, Phelps was so ill that Macready decided to understudy him. On February 7, the actor says:

Rehearsed Browning's play, with the idea of acting the part of *Lady Tresham*, if Mr. Phelps should continue ill. Browning came and in better humour than I have lately seen him.

On February 8, rehearsals were still under way, and Macready's mood was one of despair. The following entry of February 10 throws further light on the subject:

Began the consideration and study of the part of *Tresham*, which was to occupy my single thoughts till accomplished. About a quarter past one a letter came from Willmot, informing me that Mr. Phelps would do the part, and that he "died for it", so that my time had been lost. Arrived I applied to business; offered to give to Browning and Mr. Phelps the benefit of my consideration and study in the cuts, etc. I had made one I thought particularly valuable, not letting *Tresham* die, but consigning him to a convent. Browning, however, in the worst taste, manner, and spirit, declined any further alterations, expressing himself perfectly satisfied with the manner in which Mr. Phelps executed *Lord Tresham*. I had no more to say. I could only think of Mr. Browning a very disagreeable and offensively mannered person. *Voilà tout!*

On February 11, this confession is made by Macready:

Directed the rehearsal of "Blot on [sic.] the 'Scutcheon,'" and made many valuable improvements. Browning seemed desirous to explain or qualify the strange carriage and temper of yesterday, and laid much blame on Forster for irritating him. Saw the play of "Blot on the 'Scutcheon,'" which was badly acted. Phelps's and Mrs. Stirling's parts — pretty well in Anderson's, very well in Helen Faucit's. I was *angry* after the play about the call being directed without me.

The last entry is on February 16, when Macready mentions a letter received from the Lord Chamberlain, demanding to know by what authority he had played *Blot* in the "Scutcheon."

From this outline of events, one can readily imagine several things: first, vanity, conceit, and jealous domination on the part of Macready, characteristics which have been noted in the introduction to the *Bulwer* play; on the other hand, suggestion of misunderstanding which Macready failed to record fully or fairly in his diaries. If the play was badly handled when read to the company, there must have been some reason behind the mishandling of the manuscript. Undoubtedly the relations between Browning and Macready were strained throughout the preparations for the first performance of the play. The actor's repeated changes of text, and his attempted alterations of motif must have been galling to the poet, whose work was so organic as to allow of no artificial and theatrical transpositions of scenes and motives. Browning entirely disapproved of the stage version of the play as given. In consequence, Moxon, his publisher, hastened to issue the text, as written by Browning, within twenty-four hours, in order to forestall any of Macready's corrections. This prompted No. 5 of "Bells and Pomegranates." It is recorded that the play was written within five days.

Let us now see Browning's own impression of what occurred during the negotiations and preparations preceding the first performance of "A Blot in the Scutcheon." Turning to Mrs. Sutherland Orr's "Life", there is a letter written to Mr. Hill which is here quoted in full:

19, Warwick Crescent:
December 15, 188

My dear Mr. Hill,

It was kind and considerate of you to suppress the paragraph which you send me — and of which the publication would have been unpleasant for reasons quite other than as regarding my own work, — which exists to defend or accuse itself. You will judge of the true reasons when I tell you the facts — so much of them as contradicts the statements of your critic — who, I suppose, has received a stimulus from the notice, in an American paper which arrived last week, of Mr. Lawrence Barrett's intention "shortly to produce the play" in New York — and subsequently in London: so that "the failure" forty-one years ago might be duly influential at present — or two years hence perhaps. The "mere amateurs" are no high game.

Macready received and accepted the play, while he was engaged at the Haymarket, and retained it for Drury Lane, of which I was ignorant that he was about to become the manager: he accepted it "at the instigation" of nobody, — and Charles Dickens was not in England when he did so: it was read to him after his return, by Forster — and the glowing letter which contained his opinion of it, although directed by him to be shown to myself, was never heard of nor seen by me till printed in Forster's book some thirty years after. When the Drury Lane season began, Macready informed me that he should accept the play when he had brought out two others — "The Patrician's Daughter" and "Plighted Troth": having done so, he wrote to me that the former had been unsuccessful in money drawing, and the latter had "smashed his arrangements altogether": but he would still produce my play. I had — in my ignorance of certain symptoms better understood by Macready's professional acquaintance — I had no notion that it was a proper thing, in such a case, to "release him from his promise"; on the contrary, I should have fancied that such a proposal was offensive. Soon after, Macready begged that I would call on him: he said the play had been read to the actors the day before, "and laughed at from beginning to end": on my speaking my mind about this, he explained that the reading had been done by the Prompter, a grotesque person with a red nose and wooden leg, ill at ease in the love scenes, and that he would himself make amends by reading the play next morning — which he did, and very adequately — but apprised me that, in consequence of the state of his mind, harassed by business and various trouble, the principal character must be taken by Mr. Phelps; and again I failed to understand, — what Forster subsequently assured me was plain as the sun at noonday, — that to allow at Macready's theatre any other than Macready to play the principal part in a new piece was suicidal, — and really believed I was meeting his exigencies by accepting the substitution. At the rehearsal, Macready announced that Mr. Phelps was ill, and that he himself would read the part: on the third rehearsal Mr. Phelps appeared for the first time, and sat in a chair while Macready not only read, but rehearsed the part. The next morning Mr. Phelps waylaid me at the stage-door to say, with much emotion, that it never was intended that he should be instrumental in the success of a new tragedy, and that Macready would play *Tresham* on the ground that himself, Phelps, was unable to do so. He added that he could not expect me to waive such an advantage.

but that, if I were prepared to waive it, "he would take ether, sit up all night, and have the words in his memory by next day." I bade him follow me to the green-room, and hear what I decided upon — which was that as Macready had given him the part, he should keep it: this was on a Thursday; rehearsed on Friday and Saturday — the play being acted the same evening, — *of the fifth day after the "reading" by Macready*. Macready at once wished to reduce the importance of the "play" — as he styled it in the bills — and to leave out so much of the text, that I baffled him by getting it printed in four and twenty hours, by Moxon's assistance. He wanted me to call it "The Miser!" — and I have before me, while I write, the stage-acting copy, with no lines of his own insertion to avoid the tragical ending — *Tresham* was to announce his intention of going into a monastery! all this, to keep up the belief that Macready, and Macready alone, could produce a veritable "tragedy", produced before.

Not a shilling was spent on scenery or dresses — and a striking scene which had been used for the "Patrician's Daughter" did duty a second time. Your critic considers this treatment of the play an instance of the "failure of powerful and experienced actors" to ensure its success, — I can only say that my own opinion was shown by at once breaking off a friendship of many years and a friendship which had a right to be plainly and simply told that the play had contributed as a proof of it, would, through a change of circumstances, no longer be to my friend's advantage, — all I could possibly care for. Only recently, when by the publication of Macready's journals the extent of his pecuniary embarrassments at that time was made known, could I in a measure understand his motives for such conduct — and less than ever understand why he so strangely disguised and disfigured them. If "applause" means success, the play thus maimed and maltreated was successful enough: it "made way" for Macready's own benefit, and the theatre closed a fortnight earlier.

Having kept silence for all these years, in spite of repeated explanations, and the style of your critics, that the play "failed in spite of the best endeavours", I, I hardly wish to revive a very painful matter: on the other hand, — as I have said, my play subsists, and is as open to praise or blame as it was forty-five years ago: is it necessary to search out what somebody or other, — not probably a jealous adherent of Macready, "the only organizer of theatrical stories", chose to say on the subject? If the characters are "abhorrent" and "inscrutable" — and the language conformable, — they were so when Dickens pronounced upon them, and will be so whenever the critic pleases to consider them — which, if he ever has an opportunity of doing, apart from the printed copy, I can assure you is through no notion of mine. This particular experience was sufficient: but the Play is out of my power now; though amateurs and actors may do what they please.

Of course, this being the true story, I should desire that it were told *thus* and no otherwise, if it must be told at all: but *not* as a statement of mine, — the substance of it has been partly stated already by more than one qualified person, and if I have been willing to let the poor matter drop, surely there is no need that it should be gone into now when Macready and his Athenæum Colder are no longer able to speak for themselves: this is just a word to you,

dear Mr. Hill, and may be brought under the notice of your critic if you think proper — but only for the facts — not as a communication for the public.

Yes, thank you, I am in full health, as you wish — and I wish you and Mr. Hill, I assure you, all the good appropriate to the season. My sister has completely recovered from her illness, and is grateful for your enquiries.

With best regards to Mrs. Hill, and an apology for this long letter, which, however, — when once induced to write it, — I could not well shorten, believe me,

Yours truly ever,
Robert Browning

This letter was followed by one to Mr. Hill, dated December 21, 1884, which continues the history :

My dear Hill, — Your goodness must extend to letting me have the last word — one of sincere thanks. You cannot suppose I doubted for a moment of a goodwill which I have had abundant proof of. I only took the occasion your considerate letter gave me, to tell the simple truth which my forty years' silence is a sign I would only tell on compulsion. I never thought your critic had any less generous motive for alluding to the performance as he did than the which he professes: he doubtless heard the account of the matter which Macready and his intimates gave currency to at the time; and which, being confined for a while to their limited number, I never chose to notice. But in late years I have got to *read*, — not merely *hear*, — of the play's failure "where all the efforts of my friend the great actor could not avert"; and the nonsense of this untruth gets hard to bear. I told you the principal facts in the letter I very hastily wrote: I could, had it been worth while, corroborate them by others in plenty, and refer to the living witnesses — Lady Martin, Mrs. Stirling, and (I believe) Mr. Anderson: it was solely through the admirable loyalty of the two former that . . . a play . . . deprived of every advantage, in the way of scenery, dresses, and rehearsing — proved what Macready himself declared it to be — "a complete success." So he sent a servant to tell me "in case there was a call for the author at the end of the act" — to which I replied that the author had been too sick and sorry at the whole treatment of his play to do any such thing. Such a call there truly *was*, and Mr. Anderson had come forward and "beg the author to come forward if he were in the house — a circumstance of which he was not aware:" whereat the author laughed at him from a box just opposite. . . . I would submit to anybody drawing a conclusion from one or two facts past contradiction, whether that play could have thoroughly failed which was not only not withdrawn at once, but acted three nights in the same week, and, years afterwards, reproduced in his own theatre during my absence in Italy, by Mr. Phelps — the person most completely aware of the untoward circumstances which stood originally in the way of success. Why not inquire how it happens that, this second time, there was no doubt of the play's doing as well as plays ordinarily do? for those were not the days of a "run."

. . . This "last word" has indeed been the Aristophanic one of fifty syllables: but I have spoken it, relieved myself, and commend all that con-

s me to the approved and valued friend of which I am proud to account
 self in corresponding friendship,

His truly ever,
 Robert Browning.

Browning was always eager to set straight the difficulties between Macready
 himself, and William Archer records a letter written by the poet which in a
 ant form reviews the same events:

It would seem, by all the evidence I had afterwards, that I was supposed to
 self understand the expediency of begging to withdraw, at least for a time,
 own work — saving Macready the imaginary failure to keep a promise to
 sh I never attached particular importance. As so many hints to my dull
 ception of this, Macready declined to play his part, caused the play to be
 in my absence to the actors by a ludicrously incapable person — the
 It being, as he informed me, “that the play was laughed at from the begin-
 to the end” — naturally enough, a girl’s part being made comical by a
 nosed, one-legged, elderly gentleman [Willmott, the prompter] — then,
 r proposing to take away from his substitute the opportunity of distinction
 ad given him (to which I refused my consent), leaving the play to a fate
 sh it somehow managed to escape. Macready was *fuori di se* from the
 ment when, in pure ignorance of what he was driving at, I acquiesced in his
 osal that a serious play of any pretension should appear under his man-
 nent with any other protagonist than himself. When the more learned
 equently enlightened me a little, I was angry and disinclined to take ad-
 — but it is happily over so long ago! One friendly straightforward word
 ne effect that what was intended for an advantage would, under circum-
 ces of which I was altogether ignorant, prove the reverse — how easy to
 e spoken, and what regret it would have spared us both!

contemporary impression of the drama is to be had in a letter written by
 s Dickens, on November 25, 1842:

Browning’s play has thrown me into a perfect passion of sorrow. To say
 there is anything in its subject save what is lovely, true, deeply affecting,
 of the best emotion, the most earnest feeling, and the most true and tender
 ce of interest, is to say that there is no light in the sun, and no heat in
 d. It is full of genius, natural and great thoughts, profound and yet simple
 beautiful in its vigor. I know nothing that is so affecting, nothing in any
 k I have ever read, as *Mildred’s* recurrence to that “I was so young — I
 no mother.” I know no love like it, no passion like it, no moulding of a
 adid thing after its conception, like it. And I swear it is a tragedy that
 r be played; and must be played, moreover, by Macready. There are
 e things I would have changed if I could (they are very slight, mostly
 ten lines); and I assuredly would have the old servant *begin his tale upon the*
 e; and be taken by the throat, or drawn upon, by his master, in its com-
 cement. But the tragedy I never shall forget, or less vividly remember
 I do now. And if you tell Browning that I have seen it, tell him that I
 eve from my soul there is no man living (and not many dead) who could
 duce such a work.

We get a further picture of the circumstances attending the reading of the to Phelps and his company from an article in *Blackwood's Magazine*, for written by Helen Faucit. She states:

It seems but yesterday that I sat by his [Mr. Elton's] side in the great room at the reading of Robert Browning's beautiful drama, "A Blot in 'Scutcheon." As a rule Mr. Macready always read the new plays. Knowing, I suppose, to some press of business, the task was entrusted on this occasion to the head prompter, — a clever man in his way, but wholly unfitted to bring out, or even to understand, Mr. Browning's meaning. Consequently the delicate, subtle lines were twisted, perverted, and sometimes even made ridiculous in his hands. My "cruel father" was a warm admirer of the poet. He sat writhing and indignant, and tried by gentle asides to make me see the real meaning of the verse. But somehow the mischief proved irreparable, and a few of the actors during the rehearsals chose to continue to misunderstand the text, and never took the interest in the play which they must have done had Mr. Macready read it, — for he had great power as a reader. I always thought it was chiefly because of this *contresens* that a play, so thoroughly dramatic, failed, despite its painful story, to make the great success which was justly its due.

A study of "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" involves a comparison of several texts. The play was given its first presentation in London on February 11, 1844. It was acted by the London Browning Society, on May 2, 1885, the same year that it was produced in America by Mr. Lawrence Barrett, who, so it is recorded, omitted the opening scene and the last three of the second act. The Barrett edition was issued and annotated by W. J. Rolfe and Miss Hersey.¹

"A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" was followed, in 1844, by "Colombe's Birthday" in 1846, by "Luria" and "A Soul's Tragedy"; and, in 1853, by "In a Balcony."

"A Blot in the 'Scutcheon", which has been seen in America since Lawrence Barrett's time, through the enthusiastic energies of Mrs. Sarah Cowell LeMay, is one of the least involved of the Browning dramas. It is rich in poetry and interesting in characterization, but it is lacking in originality of story, and weak in consistency of logical movement. Its structure is somewhat akin to the structure of the story of "Francesca da Rimini", although none of the tragic exists between *Mildred* and her brother, *Tresham*, that exists between *Francesca* and her husband, *Guido*. One can realize the pathetic appeal of *Mildred*, who is only fourteen, that she had no mother, that she did not know, and so she lives. But it hardly satisfies a consistently minded observer, when the dramatist explains that the whole tragedy of illicit love is due not to any opposition but to a coyness and reticence and bashfulness on the part of the lover. One is tempted to say, after the hero and heroine die, and are joined in death by the brother, whose family has been the undoing of everyone concerned, that the tragedy ceases somewhat to be tragedy in the deep sense of the word, and that the "casualty list" is entirely unjustified by the smallness of the obstacle.

Had Browning thoroughly realized his dramatic opportunities, he would have made more out of that dramatic situation where *Mertoun* goes to ask for the hand

¹The stage history of "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" is contained in W. Davenport Adams' "Dictionary of the Drama."

d from her brother ; for here is a conflict of emotion well worthy of dramatic
ent — *Mertoun* asking for the hand of a woman already his mistress, and
m welcoming into his family a man who has already done it so much ill. The
y is too swift in its outward motivation, therefore, to take advantage of such
nant situation.

jected to a careful analysis of its dramatic elements, "A Blot in the
neon" does not meet the requirements of great drama. It shows Browning
ch addicted to those technical tricks of thought, resulting in sentences which,
ough involved, constitute poetry and create style ; yet which are hardly
re when uttered by the actor. His is a type of dramatic writing filled with
alized thought which does so much to choke dramatic action, and to make
ething which is noble poetry, almost a still-born drama.

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

A TRAGEDY
IN THREE ACTS

By ROBERT BROWNING

PERSONS

MILDRED TRESHAM	Miss Helen F
GUENDOLEN TRESHAM	Mrs. Stirling
THOROLD, Lord Tresham	Mr. Phelps
AUSTIN TRESHAM	Mr. Hudson
HENRY, Earl Mertoun	Mr. Anderson
GERARD	Mr. G. Benne

Other retainers of Lord Tresham

TIME, 17—

Given at Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, February 11, 1843.

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

ACT I

1ST FIRST. — *The interior of a lodge in LORD TRESHAM'S park. Many RETAINERS crowded at the window, supposed to command a view of the entrance to his mansion. GERARD, the warrener, his back to a table on which are flagons, etc.*

RETAINER. Ay, do! push, friends, and then you'll push down me!

What for? Does any hear a runner's foot
steed's trample or a coach-wheel's cry?

Will the Earl come or his least poursui-
vant?

There's no breeding in a man of you
Gerard yonder: here's a half-place
bet,
Gerard!

GERARD. Save your courtesies, my friend.
It's my place.

RETAINER. Now, Gerard, out with it!

What makes you sullen, this of all the days

of the year? To-day that young rich
countifful,

some Earl Mertoun, whom alone
they match

our Lord Tresham through the
countryside,

coming here in utmost bravery
to seek our master's sister's hand?

GERARD. What then?

RETAINER. What then? Why, you, she speaks to, if she meets

him in worship, smiles on as you hold
part

oughts to let her through her forest
talks,

and always favourite for your no-
deserts,

and he's heard, these three days, how
Earl Mertoun sues

To lay his heart and house and broad
lands too

At Lady Mildred's feet: and while we
squeeze

Ourselves into a mousehole lest we miss
One congee of the least page in his
train,

You sit o' one side — "there's the Earl,"
say I —

"What then?" say you!

3RD RETAINER. I'll wager he has let
Both swans he tamed for Lady Mildred
swim

Over the falls and gain the river!

GERARD. **Ralph,**
Is not to-morrow my inspecting-day
For you and for your hawks?

4TH RETAINER. Let Gerard be!
He's coarse-grained, like his carved
black crossbow stock.

Ha, look now, while we squabble with
him, look!

Well done, now — is not this beginning,
now,

To purpose?

1ST RETAINER. Our retainers look
' as fine —

That's comfort. Lord, how Richard
holds himself

With his white staff! Will not a knave
behind

Prick him upright?

4TH RETAINER. He's only bowing,
fool!

The Earl's man bent us lower by this
much.

1ST RETAINER. That's comfort.
Here's a very cavalcade!

3RD RETAINER. I don't see wherefore
Richard, and his troop

Of silk and silver varlets there, should
find

Their perfumed selves so indispensable
On high days, holidays! Would it so
disgrace

Our family, if I, for instance, stood —

In my right hand a cast of Swedish hawks,
A leash of greyhounds in my left? —
GERARD. — With Hugh
The logman for supporter, in his right
The bill-hook, in his left the brushwood-
shears!

3RD RETAINER. Out on you, crab!
What next, what next? The Earl!

1ST RETAINER. Oh Walter, groom,
our horses, do they match
The Earl's? Alas, that first pair of
the six —

They paw the ground — Ah Walter!
and that brute

Just on his haunches by the wheel!

6TH RETAINER. Ay — ay!
You, Philip, are a special hand, I hear,
At soups and sauces: what's a horse to
you?

D'ye mark that beast they've slid into
the midst
So cunningly? — then, Philip, mark
this further;

No leg has he to stand on!

1ST RETAINER. No? That's
comfort.

2ND RETAINER. Peace, Cook! The
Earl descends. Well, Gerard, see
The Earl at least! Come, there's a
proper man,

I hope! Why, Ralph, no falcon, Pole
or Swede,

Has got a starrier eye.

3RD RETAINER. His eyes are blue:
But leave my hawks alone!

4TH RETAINER. So young, and yet
So tall and shapely!

5TH RETAINER. Here's Lord Tre-
sham's self!

There now — there's what a nobleman
should be!

He's older, graver, loftier, he's more
like

A House's head.

2ND RETAINER. But you'd not
have a boy

— And what's the Earl beside? —
possess too soon

That stateliness?

1ST RETAINER. Our master takes
his hand —

Richard and his white staff are on the
move —

Back fall our people — (tsh! — there's
Timothy

Sure to get tangled in his ribbon-ties,
And Peter's cursed rosette's a-coming
off!)

— At last I see our lord's back and his
friend's;

And the whole beautiful bright
pany

Close round them — in they go!
[Jumping down from the win-
bench, and making for the
and its jugs]

Good health, long
Great joy to our Lord Tresham
his House!

6TH RETAINER. My father drove
father first to court,

After his marriage day — ay, did h

2ND RETAINER. God!
Lord Tresham, Lady Mildred, and
Earl!

Here, Gerard, reach your beaker!

GERARD. Drink, my b
Don't mind me — all's not right a
me — drink!

2ND RETAINER. [Aside] He's ve
now, that he let the show esca
[To GERARD] Remember that the
returns this way.

GERARD. That way?

2ND RETAINER. Just so.

GERARD. Then my way's her

2ND RETAINER. Old Ge
Will die soon — mind, I said it!

was used

To care about the pitifullest thing

That touched the House's honour,
an eye

But his could see wherein: and
cause

Of scarce a quarter this importa
Gerard

Fairly had fretted flesh and bone a
In cares that this was right, nor

was wrong,
Such point decorous, and such sq

by rule —
He knew such niceties, no herald r

And now — you see his humour:
he will!

[1ST] RETAINER. God help
Who's for the great servants'-b

To hear what's going on inside? Th
follow

Lord Tresham into the saloon.

3RD RETAINER. I! —

4TH RETAINER. I

Leave Frank alone for catching, at
door,

Some hint of how the parley
inside!

Prosperity to the great House
more!

Here's the last drop!

1ST RETAINER. Have at you! B
hurrah!

THE SECOND. — *A Saloon in the Mansion.*

er LORD TRESHAM, LORD MERTOUN,
AUSTIN, and GUENDOLEN]

TRESHAM. I welcome you, Lord
Mertoun, yet once more,
his ancestral roof of mine. Your
name

oble among the noblest in itself,
taking in your person, fame avers,
price and lustre, — (as that gem
you wear,

mitted from a hundred knightly
breasts,

n chased and set and fixed by its
last lord,

s to re-kindle at the core) — your
name

ld win you welcome! —

MERTOUN. Thanks!

TRESHAM. — But add to that,

our worthiness and grace and dignity
our proposal for uniting both

Houses even closer than respect
es them now — add these, and you

must grant

favour more, nor that the least, —
to think

welcome I should give; — 'tis
given! My lord,

only brother, Austin: he's the
king's.

cousin, Lady Guendolen — be-
trothed

Austin: all are yours.

MERTOUN. I thank you — less
the expressed commendings which

your seal,

only that, authenticates — forbids
putting from me . . . to my heart

I take

praise . . . but praise less claims
my gratitude,

at the indulgent insight it implies
that must needs be uppermost with

one
comes, like me, with the bare

leave to ask,

weighed and measured unimpas-
sioned words,

't, which, if as calmly 'tis denied,
must withdraw, content upon his

cheek,

air within his soul. That I dare ask
ly, near boldly, near with confi-

dence

gift, I have to thank you. Yes,
Lord Tresham,

re your sister — as you'd have one
love

That lady . . . oh more, more I love
her! Wealth,

Rank, all the world thinks me, they're
yours, you know,

To hold or part with, at your choice —
but grant

My true self, me without a rood of land,
A piece of gold, a name of yesterday,

Grant me that lady, and you . . .
Death or life?

GUENDOLEN. [*Apart to AUSTIN*] Why,
this is loving, Austin!

AUSTIN. He's so young!

GUENDOLEN. Young? Old enough,
I think, to half surmise

He never had obtained an entrance here,
Were all this fear and trembling needed.

AUSTIN. Hush!

He reddens.

GUENDOLEN. Mark him, Austin;
that's true love!

Ours must begin again.

TRESHAM. We'll sit, my lord.

Ever with best desert goes diffidence.

I may speak plainly nor be miscon-
ceived.

That I am wholly satisfied with you
On this occasion, when a falcon's eye

Were dull compared with mine to search
out faults,

Is somewhat. Mildred's hand is hers
to give

Or to refuse.

MERTOUN. But you, you grant
my suit?

I have your word if hers?

TRESHAM. My best of words

If hers encourage you. I hope it will.

Have you seen Lady Mildred, by the
way?

MERTOUN. I . . . I . . . our two
demesnes, remember, touch;

I have been used to wander carelessly
After my stricken game: the heron

roused

Deep in my woods, has trailed its broken
wing

Thro' thickets and glades a mile in yours,
— or else

Some eyass ill-reclaimed has taken
flight

And lured me after her from tree to
tree,

I marked not whither. I have come
upon

The lady's wondrous beauty unaware,
And — and then . . . I have seen her.

GUENDOLEN. [*Aside to AUSTIN*]

Note that mode

Of faltering out that, when a lady
passed,

He, having eyes, did see her! You had said —
 "On such a day I scanned her, head to foot;
 "Observed a red, where red should not have been,
 "Outside her elbow; but was pleased enough
 "Upon the whole." Let such irreverent talk
 Be lessoned for the future!

TRESHAM. What's to say
 May be said briefly. She has never known
 A mother's care; I stand for father too.
 Her beauty is not strange to you, it seems —

You cannot know the good and tender heart,
 Its girl's trust and its woman's constancy,
 How pure yet passionate, how calm yet kind,

How grave yet joyous, how reserved yet free
 As light where friends are — how imbued with lore
 The world most prizes, yet the simplest, yet

The . . . one might know I talked of
 Mildred — thus
 We brothers talk!

MERTOUN. I thank you.
 TRESHAM. In a word,
 Control's not for this lady; but her wish

To please me outstrips in its subtlety
 My power of being pleased: herself creates

The want she means to satisfy. My heart
 Prefers your suit to her as 'twere its own.

Can I say more?
 MERTOUN. No more — thanks,
 thanks — no more!

TRESHAM. This matter then discussed . . .

MERTOUN. — We'll waste no breath
 On aught less precious. I'm beneath the roof

Which holds her: while I thought of that, my speech

To you would wander — as it must not do,

Since as you favour me I stand or fall.
 I pray you suffer that I take my leave!

TRESHAM. With less regret 'tis suffered, that again

We meet, I hope, so shortly.

MERTOUN. We? again? —

Ah, yes, forgive me — when shall you will crown

Your goodness by forthwith apprising
 When . . . if . . . the lady will point a day

For me to wait on you — and her.
 TRESHAM. So s

As I am made acquainted with thoughts

On your proposal — howsoe'er lean —

A messenger shall bring you the res
 MERTOUN. You cannot bind more to you, my lord.

Farewell till we renew . . . I tr
 renew

A converse ne'er to disunite again.
 TRESHAM. So may it prove!

MERTOUN. You, lady, you, sir, t
 My humble salutation!

GUENDOLEN AND AUSTIN. Than
 TRESHAM. Within the

[*Servants enter. TRESHAM conducts MERTOUN to the door. Meantime AUSTIN remarks,*]

W
 Here I have an advantage of the E
 Confess now! I'd not think that was safe

Because my lady's brother stood friend!

Why, he makes sure of her — "do say, yes —

"She'll not say, no," — what comes to beside?

I should have prayed the brother "speak this speech,

"For Heaven's sake urge this on her put in this —

"Forget not, as you'd save me, t'other thing, —

"Then set down what she says, how she looks,

"And if she smiles, and" (in an unbreath)

"Only let her accept me, and do you
 "And all the world refuse me, if dare!"

GUENDOLEN. That way you'd ta
 friend Austin? What a shame

I was your cousin, tamely from first

Your bride, and all this fervour's to waste!

Do you know you speak sensibly to-d
 The Earl's a fool.

AUSTIN. Here's Thor
 Tell him so!

TRESHAM [*returning*]. Now, voi
 voices! 'St! the lady's first!

seems he? — seems he not . . .
 come, faith give fraud
 mercy-stroke whenever they en-
 rage!

With fraud, up with faith! How
 seems the Earl?

me! a blazon! if you knew their
 worth,

you will never! come — the Earl?

GUENDOLEN. He's young.

TRESHAM. What's she? an infant
 have in heart and brain.

g! Mildred is fourteen, remark!
 and you . . .

n, how old is she?

GUENDOLEN. There's tact for you!
 tant that being young was good
 excuse

e should tax him . . . Well?

TRESHAM — With
 GUENDOLEN. — With
 lacking wit.

TRESHAM. He lacked wit? Where
 might he lack wit, so please you?

GUENDOLEN. In standing straighter
 than the steward's rod

making you the tiresomest ha-
 rangue,

ad of slipping over to my side
 softly whispering in my ear, "Sweet

ady,
 ur cousin there will do me detriment

little dreams of: he's absorbed,
 I see,

my old name and fame — be sure
 he'll leave

Mildred, when his best account
 of me

ended, in full confidence I wear
 grandsire's periwig down either

cheek.
 lost unless your gentleness vouch-

safes" . . . "To give a best of

TRESHAM. . . . best accounts, yourself,
 ne and my demerits." You are

right!
 should have said what now I say

for him.
 golden creature, will you help us all?

's Austin means to vouch for much,
 but you

ou are . . . what Austin only
 knows! Come up,

three of us: she's in the library
 doubt, for the day's wearing fast.

Precede!

GUENDOLEN. Austin, how we
 must —!

TRESHAM. Must what? Must
 speak truth,

Malignant tongue! Detect one fault
 in him!

I challenge you!

GUENDOLEN. Witchcraft's a fault
 in him,

For you're bewitched.

TRESHAM. What's urgent we obtain
 ls, that she soon receive him — say, to-

morrow —

Next day at furthest.

GUENDOLEN. Ne'er instruct me!

TRESHAM. Come!
 — He's out of your good graces, since

forsooth,

He stood not as he'd carry us by storm
 With his perfections! You're for the

composed

Manly assured becoming confidence!

— Get her to say, "to-morrow," and
 I'll give you . . .

I'll give you black Urganda, to be
 spoiled

With petting and snail-paces. Will
 you? Come!

SCENE THIRD. — MILDRED'S chamber.

A painted window overlooks the
 park.

[MILDRED and GUENDOLEN]

GUENDOLEN. Now, Mildred, spare
 those pains. I have not left

Our talkers in the library, and climbed
 The wearisome ascent to this your

bower

In company with you, — I have not
 dared . . .

Nay, worked such prodigies as sparing
 you

Lord Mertoun's pedigree before the
 flood,

Which Thorold seemed in very act to
 tell

— Or bringing Austin to pluck up that
 most

Firm-rooted heresy — your suitor's eyes,
 He would maintain, were gray instead

of blue —

I think I brought him to contrition! —
 Well,

I have not done such things, (all to de-
 serve

A minute's quiet cousin's talk with you,)
 To be dismissed so coolly.

MILDRED. Guendolen!
 What have I done? what could sug-

gest . . .

GUENDOLEN. There, there!
 Do I not comprehend you'd be alone

To throw those testimonies in a heap,
Thorold's enlargings, Austin's brevities,
With that poor silly heartless Guendolen's

Ill-timed misplaced attempted smart-
nesses —

And sift their sense out? now, I come
to spare you

Nearly a whole night's labour. Ask
and have!

Demand, be answered! Lack I ears
and eyes?

Am I perplexed which side of the rock-
table

The Conqueror dined on when he landed
first,

Lord Mertoun's ancestor was bidden
take —

The bow-hand or the arrow-hand's great
need?

Mildred, the Earl has soft blue eyes!

MILDRED. My brother —

Did he . . . you said that he received
him well?

GUENDOLEN. If I said only "well"
I said not much.

Oh, stay — which brother?

MILDRED. Thorold! who — who else?

GUENDOLEN. Thorold (a secret) is
too proud by half, —

Nay, hear me out — with us he's even
gentler

Than we are with our birds. Of this
great House

The least retainer that e'er caught his
glance

Would die for him, real dying — no
mere talk:

And in the world, the court, if men
would cite

The perfect spirit of honour, Thorold's
name

Rises of its clear nature to their lips.

But he should take men's homage, trust
in it,

And care no more about what drew it
down.

He has desert, and that, acknowledg-
ment;

Is he content?

MILDRED. You wrong him, Guen-
dolen.

GUENDOLEN. He's proud, confess;
so proud with brooding o'er

The light of his interminable line,

An ancestry with men all paladins,

And women all . . .

MILDRED. Dear Guendolen,
'tis late!

When yonder purple pane the climbing
moon

Pierces, I know 'tis midnight.

GUENDOLEN. Well, that Tho
Should rise up from such musings,
receive

One come audaciously to graft him
into this peerless stock, yet find no

No slightest spot in such an one .

MILDRED. Who

A spot in Mertoun?

GUENDOLEN. Not your brot
therefore,

Not the whole world.

MILDRED. I am we

Guendolen.

Bear with me!

GUENDOLEN. I am foolish.

MILDRED. Oh no, k

But I would rest.

GUENDOLEN. Good night and
to you!

I said how gracefully his mantle lay
Beneath the rings of his light hair?

MILDRED. Brown? Brown?

GUENDOLEN. Brown? why, i
brown: how could you know t

MILDRED. How? did not yo

Oh, Austin 'twas, declared

His hair was light, not brown —
head! — and look,

The moon-beam purpling the
chamber! Sweet,

Good night!

GUENDOLEN. Forgive me —
the soundlier for me!

[Going, she turns sudd

Mildred

Perdition! all's discovered! Tho
finds

— That the Earl's greatest of all gr
mothers

Was grander daughter still — to
fair dame

Whose garter slipped down at
famous dance!

MILDRED. Is she — can she be r
gone at last?

My heart! I shall not reach
window. Needs

Must I have sinned much, so to su

[She lifts the small lamp whi
suspended before the Vir
image in the window, and p
it by the purple pane]

TH

[She returns to the seat in f
Mildred and Mertoun! Mildred,
consent

Of all the world and Thorold, Merto
bride!

Too late! 'Tis sweet to think
sweeter still

hope for, that this blessed end
clothes up
course of the beginning; but I know
comes too late: 'twill sweetest be
all
steal my soul away and die upon.

[A noise without]
voice! Oh why, why glided sin
the snake
the paradise Heaven meant us
both?

[The window opens softly. A
low voice sings]

Is a woman like a dew-drop, she's
purer than the purest;
Her noble heart's the noblest, yes, and
Her sure faith's the surest:
Her eyes are dark and humid, like
The depth on depth of lustre
The harebell, while her tresses,
Sweeter than the wild-grape cluster,
In golden-tinted plenty down her
Luck's rose-misted marble:
Her voice's music . . . call it the
Bell's bubbling, the bird's warble!

[A figure wrapped in a mantle
appears at the window]

This woman says, "My days were
Sunless and my nights were moonless,
And the pleasant April herbage, and
The lark's heart's outbreak tuneless,
You loved me not!" And I who —
(Ah, for words of flame!) adore her,
Am mad to lay my spirit prostrate
Helpably before her —

[He enters, approaches her seat,
and bends over her]

Enter at her portal soon, as now
The lattice takes me,
By noontide as by midnight make
Thine mine, as hers she makes me!

[The EARL throws off his slouched
hat and long cloak]

My heart sings, so I sing, Beloved!
MILDRED. Sit, Henry — do not take
My hand!

MERTOUN. 'Tis mine.
Meeting that appalled us both so
much
ed.

MILDRED. What begins now?

MERTOUN. Happiness
Is the world contains not.

MILDRED. That is it.
Happiness would, as you say, exceed
The whole world's best of blisses: we
do we

Deserve that? Utter to your soul,
What mine

Long since, Beloved, has grown used to
hear,

Like a death-knell, so much regarded
once,

And so familiar now; this will not be!

MERTOUN. Oh, Mildred, have I met
your brother's face?

Compelled myself — if not to speak un-
truth,

Yet to disguise, to shun, to put aside
The truth, as — what had e'er prevailed
on me

Save you, to venture? Have I gained
at last

Your brother, the one scarer of your
dreams,

And waking thoughts' sole apprehen-
sion too?

Does a new life, like a young sunrise,
break

On the strange unrest of our night, con-
fused

With rain and stormy flaw — and will
you see

No dripping blossoms, no fire-tinted
drops

On each live spray, no vapour steam-
ing up,

And no expressless glory in the East?

When I am by you, to be ever by
you,

When I have won you and may worship
you,

Oh, Mildred, can you say "this will
not be"?

MILDRED. Sin has surprised us, so
will punishment.

MERTOUN. No — me alone, who
sinned alone!

MILDRED. The night
You likened our past life to — was it
storm

Throughout to you then, Henry?

MERTOUN. Of your life
I spoke — what am I, what my life, to
waste

A thought about when you are by me?
— you

It was, I said my folly called the storm
And pulled the night upon. 'Twas day
with me —

Perpetual dawn with me.

MILDRED. Come what, come will,
You have been happy: take my hand!

MERTOUN [after a pause]. How good
Your brother is! I figured him a cold —
Shall I say, haughty man?

MILDRED. They told me all.
I know all.

MERTOUN. It will soon be over.

MILDRED. Over?

Oh, what is over? what must I live through
And say, "'tis over"? Is our meeting over?

Have I received in presence of them all
The partner of my guilty love — with brow

Trying to seem a maiden's brow — with lips

Which make believe that when they strive to form

Replies to you and tremble as they strive,

It is the nearest ever they approached
A stranger's . . . Henry, yours that stranger's . . . lip —

With cheek that looks a virgin's, and that is . . .

Ah, God, some prodigy of thine will stop

This planned piece of deliberate wickedness

In its birth even! some fierce leprous spot

Will mar the brow's dissimulating! I
Shall murmur no smooth speeches got by heart,

But, frenzied, pour forth all our woeful story,

The love, the shame, and the despair — with them.

Round me aghast as round some cursed fount

That should spirt water, and spouts blood. I'll not

. . . Henry, you do not wish that I should draw

This vengeance down? I'll not affect a grace

That's gone from me — gone once, and gone for ever!

MERTOUN. Mildred, my honour is your own. I'll share

Disgrace I cannot suffer by myself.

A word informs your brother I retract
This morning's offer; time will yet bring forth

Some better way of saving both of us.

MILDRED. I'll meet their faces, Henry!

MERTOUN. When? to-morrow!

Get done with it!

MILDRED. Oh, Henry, not to-morrow!

Next day! I never shall prepare my words

And looks and gestures sooner. — How you must

Despise me!

MERTOUN. Mildred, break it
choose,

A heart the love of you uplifted —
Uplifts, thro' this protracted agon
To heaven! but Mildred, answer me
first pace

The chamber with me — once again
now, say

Calmly the part, the . . . what it
me

You see contempt (for you did say
tempt)

— Contempt for you in! I will
it off

And cast it from me! — but no —
you'll not

Repeat that? — will you, Mildred?
peat that?

MILDRED. Dear Henry!

MERTOUN. I was scarce a boy
e'en now

What am I more? And you were
fantine

When first I met you; why, you were
fell loose

On either side! My fool's-cheek
dens now

Only in the recalling how it burned
That morn to see the shape of me
dream —

You know we boys are prodigious
charms

To her we dream of — I had heard
one,

Had dreamed of her, and I was close
her,

Might speak to her, might live and
her own,

Who knew? I spoke. Oh, Mildred,
feel you not

That now, while I remember
glance

Of yours, each word of yours,
power to test

And weigh them in the diamond
of pride,

Resolved the treasure of a first and
Heart's love shall have been bartered
at its worth,

— That now I think upon your passion
And utter ignorance of guilt —
own

Or other's guilt — the girlish
guised

Delight at a strange novel passion
(I talk

A silly language, but interpret, you
If I, with fancy at its full, and reason
Scarce in its germ, enjoined you see
If you had pity on my passion, pity
On my protested sickness of the soul

beside you, hear you breathe, and
 catch
 eyelids and the eyes beneath —
 you
 led gifts and knew not they were
 gifts —
 new mad at last with enterprise
 must behold my beauty in her
 power
 wish — (I was ignorant of even
 my desires — what then were you?)
 sorrow —
 if the end came — must I now
 pronounce
 reason, blind myself to light, say
 truth
 and lie to God and my own soul?
 empty were all of this!

MILDRED. Do you believe . . .
 Henry, I'll not wrong you — you
 believe
 I was ignorant. I scarce grieve
 for
 past. We'll love on; you will
 love me still.
 MERTOUN. Oh, to love less what
 he has injured! Dove,
 opinion I have rashly hurt, my
 heart —
 my heart's warmth not nurse thee
 to strength?
 If I have crushed, shall I not care
 for thee?
 o'er my crest, my fight-mark
 and device!

And, I love you and you love me.
 MILDRED. Go!
 at your last word. I shall sleep
 to-night.

MERTOUN. This is not our last meet-
 ing?

MILDRED. One night more.

MERTOUN. And then — think, then!

MILDRED. Then, no sweet courtship-
 days,
 dawning consciousness of love for

me,
 strange and palpitating births of
 new
 words and looks, no innocent fears
 and hopes,
 hopes and confidences: morning's
 never!

MERTOUN. How else should love's
 perfected noontide follow?

The dawn promised shall the day
 perform.

MILDRED. So may it be! but —

You are cautious, Love?
 are that unobserved you scaled
 the walls?

MERTOUN. Oh, trust me! Then our
 final meeting's fixed
 To-morrow night?

MILDRED. Farewell! Stay, Henry
 . . . wherefore?

His foot is on the yew-tree bough; the
 turf

Receives him; now the moonlight as
 he runs

Embraces him — but he must go — is
 gone.

Ah, once again he turns — thanks,
 thanks, my Love!

He's gone. Oh, I'll believe him every
 word!

I was so young, I loved him so, I had
 No mother, God forgot me, and I fell.
 There may be pardon yet: all's doubt
 beyond.

Surely the bitterness of death is past.

ACT II

SCENE. — *The Library*

[*Enter LORD TRESHAM, hastily*]

TRESHAM. This way! In, Gerard,
 quick!

[*As GERARD enters, TRESHAM
 secures the door*]

Now speak! or, wait —
 I'll bid you speak directly.

[*Seats himself*]

Now repeat
 Firmly and circumstantially the tale
 You just now told me; it eludes me;
 either

I did not listen, or the half is gone
 Away from me. How long have you
 lived here?

Here in my house, your father kept our
 woods
 Before you?

GERARD. — As his father did, my
 lord.

I have been eating, sixty years almost,
 Your bread.

TRESHAM. Yes, yes. You ever
 were of all

The servants in my father's house, I
 know,

The trusted one. You'll speak the truth.
 GERARD. I'll speak

God's truth. Night after night . . .
 TRESHAM. Since when?

GERARD. At least
 A month — each midnight has some
 man access

To Lady Mildred's chamber.

TRESHAM. Tush, "access" —
No wide words like "access" to me!

GERARD. He runs
Along the woodside, crosses to the
South,
Takes the left tree that ends the
avenue . . .

TRESHAM. The last great yew-tree?

GERARD. You might stand upon
The main boughs like a platform.
Then he . . .

TRESHAM. Quick!

GERARD. Climbs up, and, where
they lessen at the top,
— I cannot see distinctly, but he
throws,
I think — for this I do not vouch —
a line

That reaches to the lady's casement —

TRESHAM. — Which
He enters not! Gerard, some wretched
fool

Dares pry into my sister's privacy!
When such are young, it seems a precious
thing

To have approached, — to merely have
approached,

Got sight of, the abode of her they set
Their frantic thoughts upon. He does
not enter?

Gerard?

GERARD. There is a lamp that's full
i' the midst,
Under a red square in the painted glass
Of Lady Mildred's . . .

TRESHAM. Leave that name out!
Well?

That lamp?

GERARD. — Is moved at mid-
night higher up

To one pane — a small dark-blue pane;
he waits

For that among the boughs: at sight
of that,

I see him, plain as I see you, my lord,
Open the lady's casement, enter
there . . .

TRESHAM. — And stay?

GERARD. An hour, two hours.

TRESHAM. And this you saw
Once? — twice? — quick!

GERARD. Twenty times.

TRESHAM. And what brings you
Under the yew-trees?

GERARD. The first night I left
My range so far, to track the stranger stag
That broke the pale, I saw the man.

TRESHAM. Yet sent
No cross-bow shaft through the ma-
rauder?

GERARD. But

He came, my lord, the first time he
seen,

In a great moonlight, light as any
From Lady Mildred's chamber.

TRESHAM [after a pause].

have no cause
— Who could have cause to do
sister wrong?

GERARD. Oh, my lord, only on
let me this once

Speak what is on my mind!
first I noted

All this, I've groaned as if a fiery
Plucked me this way and that —

I turned

To her, fire if I turned to you, and
If down I flung myself and strove to

The lady could not have been so
years old

When I was trusted to conduct her
Through the deer-herd to stroke

snow-white fawn
I brought to eat bread from her

hand
Within a month. She ever had a
To greet me with — she . . .

could undo
What's done, to lop each limb from

this trunk . . .
All that is foolish talk, not fit for you

I mean, I could not speak and
her hurt

For Heaven's compelling. But
I was fixed

To hold my peace, each morsel of
food

Eaten beneath your roof, my birth-
too,

Choked me. I wish I had grown
in doubts

What it behoved me do. This
it seemed

Either I must confess to you, or die
Now it is done, I seem the vilest wretch

That crawls, to have betrayed my lord

TRESHAM. No,
No, Gerard!

GERARD. Let me go!

TRESHAM. A man, you
What man? Young? Not a villain

hind? What dress?
GERARD. A slouched hat and a

dark foreign cloak
Wraps his whole form; even his

is hid;
But I should judge him young: no
be sure!

TRESHAM. Why?

GERARD. He is ever
his sword projects

with the cloak.

TRESHAM. Gerard — I will not say word, no breath of this!

GERARD. Thanks, thanks, my lord!

[Goes]

TRESHAM *[paces the room. After a pause]*. Oh, thought's absurd! —

as with some monstrous fact
h, when ill thoughts beset us,
seems to give

iful God that made the sun and
stars,

waters and the green delights of
earth,

lie! I apprehend the monstrous
act —

know the maker of all worlds is
good,

yield my reason up, inadequate
concile what yet I do behold —

ing my sense! There's cheerful
lay outside:

is my library, and this the chair
rather used to sit in carelessly

his soldier-fashion, while I stood
een his knees to question him: and

ere
d our gray retainer, — as he says,
with our food, from sire to son, an

ge, —
old a story — I am to believe!

Mildred . . . oh, no, no! both
ales are true,

pure cheek's story and the fores-
er's!

d she, or could she, err — much
ess, confound

ilts of treachery, of craft, of . . .
Heaven

me within its hand! — I will sit
ere

thought settle and I see my course.
oh God, only this woe from me!

*[As he sinks his head between his
arms on the table, GUENDOLEN'S
voice is heard at the door]*

GUENDOLEN. Lord Tresham! *[She
knocks]* Is Lord Tresham there?

*[TRESHAM, hastily turning, pulls
down the first book above him
and opens it]*

TRESHAM. Come in! *[She enters]*
la, Guendolen! — good morning.

GUENDOLEN. Nothing more?

TRESHAM. What should I say more?

GUENDOLEN. Pleasant question!

more?

more. Did I besiege poor Mil-
red's brain

night till close on morning with
the Earl,"

"The Earl" — whose worth did I as-
severate

Till I am very fain to hope that . . .
Thorold,

What is all this? You are not well!
TRESHAM. Who, I?

You laugh at me.

GUENDOLEN. Has what I'm fain to
hope,

Arrived then? Does that huge tome
show some blot

In the Earl's 'scutcheon come no longer
back

Than Arthur's time?

TRESHAM. When left you Mildred's
chamber?

GUENDOLEN. Oh, late enough, I
told you! The main thing

To ask is, how I left her chamber, —
sure,

Content yourself, she'll grant this para-
gon

Of Earls no such ungracious . . .
TRESHAM. Send her here!

GUENDOLEN. Thorold?

TRESHAM. I mean — acquaint her,
Guendolen,

— But mildly!

GUENDOLEN. Mildly?

TRESHAM. Ah, you guessed aright!
I am not well: there is no hiding it.

But tell her I would see her at her
leisure —

That is, at once! here in the library!
The passage in that old Italian book

We hunted for so long is found, say,
found —

And if I let it slip again . . . you see,
That she must come — and instantly!

GUENDOLEN. I'll die
Piecemeal, record that, if there have

not gloomed
Some blot i' the 'scutcheon!

TRESHAM. Go! or, Guendolen,
Be you at call, — with Austin, if you
choose, —

In the adjoining gallery! There, go!
[GUENDOLEN goes]

Another lesson to me! — You might bid
A child disguise his heart's sore, and
conduct

Some sly investigation point by point
With a smooth brow, as well as bid me
catch

The inquisitorial cleverness some praise.
If you had told me yesterday, "There's
one

"You needs must circumvent and
practise with,

"Entrap by policies, if you would
worm

"The truth out: and that one is — Mildred!" There,
 There — reasoning is thrown away on it!
 Prove she's unchaste . . . why, you may after prove
 That she's a poisoner, traitress, what you will!
 Where I can comprehend nought, nought's to say.
 Or do, or think. Force on me but the first
 Abomination, — then outpour all plagues,
 And I shall ne'er make count of them.

[Enter MILDRED]

MILDRED. What book
 Is it I wanted, Thorold? Guendolen
 Thought you were pale; you are not pale. That book?

That's Latin surely.

TRESHAM. Mildred, here's a line,
 (Don't lean on me: I'll English it for you)

"Love conquers all things." What love conquers them?
 What love should you esteem — best love?

MILDRED. True love.

TRESHAM. I mean, and should have said, whose love is best
 Of all that love or that profess to love?

MILDRED. The list's so long: there's father's, mother's, husband's . . .

TRESHAM. Mildred, I do believe a brother's love

For a sole sister must exceed them all.
 For see now, only see! there's no alloy
 Of earth that creeps into the perfect'st gold

Of other loves — no gratitude to claim;
 You never gave her life, not even aught
 That keeps life — never tended her, instructed,

Enriched her — so, your love can claim no right

O'er her save pure love's claim: that's what I call

Freedom from earthliness. You'll never hope

To be such friends, for instance, she and you,

As when you hunted cowslips in the woods

Or played together in the meadow hay.

Oh, yes — with age, respect comes, and your worth

Is felt, there's growing sympathy of tastes,

There's ripened friendship, there's firm'd esteem:

— Much head these make against newcomer!

The startling apparition, the strange youth —

Whom one half-hour's conversing or, say,

Mere gazing at, shall change (be) all change

This Ovid ever sang about) your soul . . . Her soul, that is, — the sister soul! With her

'Twas winter yesterday; now, a warmth,

The green leaf's springing and turtle's voice,

"Arise and come away!" — whither? — far

Enough from the esteem, respect, all

The brother's somewhat insignificant Array of rights! All which he knew before,

Has calculated on so long ago! I think such love, (apart from you and mine,)

Contented with its little term of life Intending to retire betimes, aware

How soon the background must place for it,

— I think, am sure, a brother's exceeds

All the world's love in its unworldliness

MILDRED. What is this for?

TRESHAM. This, Mildred, is it Or, no, I cannot go to it so soon!

That's one of many points my heart left out —

Each day, each hour throws forth silk-slight film

Between the being tied to you birth,

And you, until those slender threads compose

A web that shrouds her daily life hopes

And fears and fancies, all her life, yours:

So close you live and yet so far apart And must I rend this web, tear

break down

The sweet and palpitating mystery That makes her sacred? You —

you I mean,

Shall I speak, shall I not speak? MILDRED. Speak!

TRESHAM. I Is there a story men could — any man

Could tell of you, you would come from me?

never think there's falsehood on
 that lip.
 There is no such story men could
 tell,"
 "I'll believe you, though I disbelieve
 world — the world of better men
 than I,
 women such as I suppose you.
 Speak!
 [a pause] Not speak? Explain
 then! Clear it up then! Move
 of the miserable weight away
 presses lower than the grave!
 Not speak?
 of the dead weight, Mildred!
 Ah, if I
 I bring myself to plainly make
 their charge
 fast you! Must I, Mildred? Silent
 till?
 [a pause] Is there a gallant that
 has night by night
 entrance to your chamber?
 [After a pause] Then, his name!
 Now, I only had a thought for you:
 now, — his name!
 MILDRED. Thorold, do you devise
 expiation for my guilt, if fit
 be! 'T is nought to say that
 I'll endure
 to bless you, — that my spirit yearns
 to purge
 stains off in the fierce renewing
 fire:
 do not plunge me into other guilt!
 guilt enough! I cannot tell his
 name.
 TRESHAM. Then judge yourself!
 How should I act? Pronounce!
 MILDRED. Oh, Thorold, you must
 never tempt me thus!
 lie here in this chamber by that
 word
 and seem like punishment: so should
 glide,
 an arch-cheat, into extremest bliss!
 be easily arranged for me: but
 you —
 would become of you?
 TRESHAM. And what will now
 be of me? I'll hide your shame
 and mine
 every eye; the dead must heave
 their hearts
 for the marble of our chapel-floor;
 cannot rise and blast you. You
 may wed
 paramour above our mother's
 tomb;
 mother cannot move from 'neath
 your foot.

We too will somehow wear this one day
 out:
 But with to-morrow hastens here —
 the Earl!
 The youth without suspicion . . . face
 can come
 From Heaven, and heart from . . .
 whence proceed such hearts?
 I have despatched last night at your
 command
 A missive bidding him present himself
 To-morrow — here — thus much is
 said; the rest
 Is understood as if 'twere written
 down —
 "His suit finds favour in your eyes."
 Now dictate
 This morning's letter that shall counter-
 mand
 Last night's — do dictate that!
 MILDRED. But, Thorold — if
 I will receive him as I said?
 TRESHAM. The Earl?
 MILDRED. I will receive him.
 TRESHAM [starting up]. Ho there!
 Guendolen!
 [GUENDOLEN and AUSTIN enter]
 And, Austin, you are welcome, too!
 Look there!
 The woman there!
 AUSTIN AND GUENDOLEN. How?
 Mildred?
 TRESHAM. Mildred once!
 Now the receiver night by night, when
 sleep
 Blesses the inmates of her father's
 house,
 — I say, the soft sly wanton that re-
 ceives
 Her guilt's accomplice 'neath this roof
 which holds
 You, Guendolen, you, Austin, and has
 held
 A thousand Treshams — never one like
 her!
 No lighter of the signal-lamp her quick
 Foul breath near quenches in hot eager-
 ness
 To mix with breath as foul! no loosener
 O' the lattice, practised in the stealthy
 tread,
 The low voice and the noiseless come-
 and-go!
 Not one composer of the bacchant's
 mien
 Into — what you thought Mildred's,
 in a word!
 Know her!
 GUENDOLEN. Oh, Mildred, look to
 me, at least!

Thorold — she's dead, I'd say, but that she stands

Rigid as stone and whiter!

TRESHAM. You have heard . . .

GUENDOLEN. Too much! You must proceed no further.

MILDRED. Yes —

Proceed! All's truth. Go from me!

TRESHAM. All is truth, She tells you! Well, you know, or ought to know,

All this I would forgive in her. I'd con-
Each precept the harsh world enjoins,
I'd take

Our ancestors' stern verdicts one by one,
I'd bind myself before them to exact
The prescribed vengeance — and one
word of hers,

The sight of her, the bare least memory
Of Mildred, my one sister, my heart's
pride

Above all prides, my all in all so long,
Would scatter every trace of my resolve.
What were it silently to waste away
And see her waste away from this day
forth,

Two scathed things with leisure to
repent,

And grow acquainted with the grave,
and die

Tired out if not at peace, and be for-
gotten?

It were not so impossible to bear.

But this — that, fresh from last night's
pledge renewed

Of love with the successful gallant
there,

She calmly bids me help her to entice,
Inveigh an unconscious trusting youth
Who thinks her all that's chaste and
good and pure,

— Invites me to betray him . . . who
so fit

As honour's self to cover shame's arch-
deed?

— That she'll receive Lord Mertoun —
(her own phrase) —

This, who could bear? Why, you have
heard of thieves,

Stabbers, the earth's disgrace, who yet
have laughed,

"Talk not to me of torture — I'll betray
"No comrade I've pledged faith to!"

— you have heard
Of wretched women — all but Mildreds
— tied

By wild illicit ties to losels vile
You'd tempt them to forsake; and
they'll reply

"Gold, friends, repute, I left for him,
I find

"In him, why should I leave him
for gold,

"Repute or friends?" — and you
felt your heart

Respond to such poor outcasts of
world

As to so many friends; bad as
please,

You've felt they were God's men
women still,

So, not to be disowned by you. But
That stands there, calmly gives

lover up
As means to wed the Earl that she
hide

Their intercourse the surelier: and,
this,

I curse her to her face before you all
Shame hunt her from the earth! T

Heaven do right
To both! It hears me now — s

judge her then!

[As MILDRED faints and f

TRESHAM rushes out]

AUSTIN. Stay, Tresham, we'll
company you!

GUENDOLEN. We?

What, and leave Mildred? We? W
where's my place

But by her side, and where yours
by mine?

Mildred — one word! Only look
me, then!

AUSTIN. No, Guendolen! I e
Thorold's voice.

She is unworthy to behold . . .

GUENDOLEN. Us t

If you spoke on reflection, and if I
Approved your speech — if you (to

the thing
At lowest) you the soldier, bound

make
The king's cause yours and fight for

and throw
Regard to others of its right or wro

— If with a death-white woman
can help,

Let alone sister, let alone a Mildred
You left her — or if I, her cousin, fri

This morning, playfellow but yes
day,

Who said, or thought at least a th
sand times,

"I'd serve you if I could," should
face round

And say, "Ah, that's only to signify
"I'd serve you while you're fit to se

yourself:

"So long as fifty eyes await the tur
"Of yours to forestall its yet h

formed wish,

proffer my assistance you'll not need —
 In every tongue is praising you,
 All join
 Praisers' chorus — when you're
 Hemmed about
 In lives between you and detraction
 — lives
 Be laid down if a rude voice, rash
 eye,
 High hand should violate the sacred
 ing
 For worship throws about you, —
 Men indeed,
 'I'll stand up for you stout as I?"
 So
 Did, and so we did, — not Mildred
 Here
 I be unworthy to behold us both,
 We should be unworthy, both of
 us,
 Beheld by — by — your meanest
 og,
 If that sword were broken in
 Our face
 Be a crowd, that badge torn off
 Our breast,
 You cast out with hooting and contempt,
 Could push his way thro' all the
 Voters, gain
 Side, go off with you and all your
 Name
 The next ditch you choose to die in!
 Austin,
 You love me? Here's Austin, Mildred, — here's
 Brother says he does not believe
 Half —
 For half that — of all he heard!
 He says,
 Up and take his hand!
 TIN. Look up and take
 And, dear Mildred!
 DRED. I — I was so young!
 e, I loved him, Thorold — and
 Had
 Other; God forgot me: so, I fell.
 ENDOLEN. Mildred!
 DRED. Require no further! Did
 dream
 I could palliate what is done?
 All's true.
 Punish me! A woman takes my
 And?
 To my hand! You do not know,
 See.
 Right that Thorold told you.
 ENDOLEN. What is this?
 To start you to?
 DRED. Oh, Austin, loosen me!

You heard the whole of it — your eyes
 were worse,
 In their surprise, than Thorold's! Oh,
 unless
 You stay to execute his sentence, loose
 My hand! Has Thorold gone, and are
 you here?
 GUENDOLEN. Here, Mildred, we two
 friends of yours will wait
 Your bidding; be you silent, sleep or
 muse!
 Only, when you shall want your bidding
 done,
 How can we do it if we are not by?
 Here's Austin waiting patiently your
 will!
 One spirit to command, and one to love
 And to believe in it and do its best,
 Poor as that is, to help it — why, the
 world
 Has been won many a time, its length
 and breadth,
 By just such a beginning!
 MILDRED. I believe
 If once I threw my arms about your
 neck
 And sunk my head upon your breast,
 that I
 Should weep again.
 GUENDOLEN. Let go her hand now,
 Austin!
 Wait for me. Pace the gallery and
 think
 On the world's seemings and realities,
 Until I call you. [AUSTIN goes]
 MILDRED. No — I cannot weep.
 No more tears from this brain — no
 sleep — no tears!
 O Guendolen, I love you!
 GUENDOLEN. Yes: and "love"
 Is a short word that says so very much!
 It says that you confide in me.
 MILDRED. Confide!
 GUENDOLEN. Your lover's name,
 then! I've so much to learn,
 Ere I can work in your behalf!
 MILDRED. My friend,
 You know I cannot tell his name.
 GUENDOLEN. At least
 He is your lover? and you love him too?
 MILDRED. Ah, do you ask me that?
 — but I am fallen
 So low!
 GUENDOLEN. You love him still,
 then?
 MILDRED. My sole prop
 Against the guilt that crushes me!
 I say,
 Each night ere I lie down, "I was so
 young —
 "I had no mother, and I loved him so!"

And then God seems indulgent, and
I dare
Trust him my soul in sleep.

GUENDOLEN. How could you let us
E'en talk to you about Lord Mertoun
then?

MILDRED. There is a cloud around
me.

GUENDOLEN. But you said
You would receive his suit in spite of
this?

MILDRED. I say there is a cloud . . .

GUENDOLEN. No cloud to me!
Lord Mertoun and your lover are the
same!

MILDRED. What maddest fancy . . .

GUENDOLEN [*calling aloud*]. Austin!
(spare your pains —

When I have got a truth, that truth
I keep) —

MILDRED. By all you love, sweet
Guendolen, forbear!

Have I confided in you . . .

GUENDOLEN. Just for this!
Austin! — Oh, not to guess it at the
first!

But I did guess it — that is, I divined,
Felt by an instinct how it was: why
else

Should I pronounce you free from all
that heap

Of sins which had been irredeemable?
I felt they were not yours — what other
way

Than this, not yours? The secret's
wholly mine!

MILDRED. If you would see me die
before his face . . .

GUENDOLEN. I'd hold my peace!
And if the Earl returns

To-night?

MILDRED. Ah Heaven, he's lost!

GUENDOLEN. I thought so. Austin!
[*Enter AUSTIN*]

Oh, where have you been hiding?

AUSTIN. Thorold's gone,
I know not how, across the meadow-
land.

I watched him till I lost him in the
skirts

O' the beech-wood.

GUENDOLEN. Gone? All thwarts us.

MILDRED. Thorold too?

GUENDOLEN. I have thought. First
lead this Mildred to her room.

Go on the other side; and then we'll
seek

Your brother: and I'll tell you, by the
way,

The greatest comfort in the world.
You said

There was a clue to all. Re-
Sweet,
He said there was a clue! I
Come!

ACT III

SCENE FIRST. — *The end of
tree Avenue under MILDRE
dow. A light seen through
red pane.*

[*Enter TRESHAM through the*

Again here! But I cannot lose
The heath — the orchard —
traversed glades

And dells and bosky paths whi
to lead

Into green wild-wood depths, b
ing

My boy's adventurous step. A
they tend

Hither or soon or late; the
shade

Breaks up, the thronged trunk
trees ope wide,

And the dim turret I have fle
fronts

Again my step; the very river
Its arm about me and conducte

To this detested spot. Why t
shun

Their will no longer: do your v
me!

Oh, bitter! To have reared a t
scheme

Of happiness, and to behold it
Were nothing: all men hope,

their hopes
Frustrate, and grieve awhile, an

anew.

But I . . . to hope that from
like ours

No horrid prodigy like this would
Were just as though I hoped th
these old

Confederates against the soverei
Children of older and yet older

Whose living coral berries drop
now

On me, on many a baron's surco
On many a beauty's wimple —

proceed

No poison-tree, to thrust, from
root,

Hither and thither its strange
arms.

Why came I here? What mus
[*A bell strikes*] A bell?

ght! and 'tis at midnight . . .
h, I catch
ods, river, plains, I catch your
eaning now,
I obey you! Hist! This tree
ill serve.

[*He retires behind one of the trees.*

*After a pause, enter MERTOUN
cloaked as before]*

MERTOUN. Not time! Beat out thy
st voluptuous beat

and fear, my heart! I thought
e clock

chapel struck as I was pushing
rough

ns. And so I shall no more see
se

ve-star! Oh, no matter for the
st!

uch the more delicious task to
atch

nd revive: to pluck out, thorn by
orn,

ces of the rough forbidden path
sh love lured her to! Each day

ust see
fear of hers effaced, some hope
newed:

there will be surprises, unfore-
en

ts in store. I'll not regret the
st.

[*The light is placed above in the
purple pane]*

me, my signal rises, Mildred's star!
r saw it lovelier than now

for the last time. If it sets,
at the re-assuring sun may dawn.

[*As he prepares to ascend the last
tree of the avenue, TRESHAM*

arrests his arm]

nd me — peasant, by your grasp!
ere's gold.

a mad freak of mine. I said I'd
uck

nch from the white-blossomed
rub beneath

asement there. Take this, and
old your peace.

SHAM. Into the moonlight yon-
er, come with me!

the shadow!

MERTOUN. I am armed, fool!

SHAM. Yes,
? You'll come into the light,
no?

nd is on your throat — refuse! —
MERTOUN. That voice!

have I heard . . . no — that
as mild and slow.

ne with you. [*They advance*]

TRESHAM. You're armed: that's
well. Declare

Your name: who are you?

MERTOUN. (Tresham! — she is lost!)

TRESHAM. Oh, silent? Do you
know, you bear yourself

Exactly as, in curious dreams I've had
How felons, this wild earth is full of,

look

When they're detected, still your kind
has looked!

The bravo holds an assured countenance,
The thief is voluble and plausible,

But silently the slave of lust has crouched
When I have fancied it before a man.

Your name!

MERTOUN. I do conjure Lord Tre-
sham — ay,

Kissing his foot, if so I might prevail —
That he for his own sake forbear to

ask

My name! As heaven's above, his
future weal

Or woe depends upon my silence!
Vain!

I read your white inexorable face.

Know me, Lord Tresham!

[*He throws off his disguises*]

TRESHAM. Mertoun!

[*After a pause*] Draw now!

MERTOUN. Hear me

But speak first!

TRESHAM. Not one least word on
your life!

Be sure that I will strangle in your
throat

The least word that informs me how
you live

And yet seem what you seem! No
doubt 'twas you

Taught Mildred still to keep that face
and sin.

We should join hands in frantic sym-
pathy

If you once taught me the unteachable,
Explained how you can live so, and so

lie.

With God's help I retain, despite my
sense,

The old belief — a life like yours is still
Impossible. Now draw!

MERTOUN. Not for my sake,
Do I entreat a hearing — for your sake,

And most, for her sake!

TRESHAM. Ha ha, what should I
Know of your ways? A miscreant like

yourself,
How must one rouse his ire? A blow?

— that's pride
No doubt, to him! One spurns him,
does one not?

Or sets the foot upon his mouth, or spits
Into his face! Come! Which, or all of
these?

MERTOUN. 'Twixt him and me and
Mildred, Heaven be judge!
Can I avoid this? Have your will,
my lord!

*[He draws and, after a few passes,
falls]*

TRESHAM. You are not hurt?

MERTOUN. You'll hear me now!

TRESHAM. But rise!

MERTOUN. Ah, Tresham, say I not
"you'll hear me now!"

And what procures a man the right to
speak

In his defence before his fellow man,
But — I suppose — the thought that
presently

He may have leave to speak before his
God

His whole defence?

TRESHAM. Not hurt? It cannot be!
You made no effort to resist me. Where
Did my sword reach you? Why not
have returned

My thrusts? Hurt where?

MERTOUN. My lord —

TRESHAM. How young he is!

MERTOUN. Lord Tresham, I am
very young, and yet

I have entangled other lives with mine.
Do let me speak, and do believe my
speech!

That when I die before you presently, —

TRESHAM. Can you stay here till I
return with help?

MERTOUN. Oh, stay by me! When
I was less than boy

I did you grievous wrong and knew it
not —

Upon my honour, knew it not! Once
known,

I could not find what seemed a better
way

To right you than I took: my life —
you feel

How less than nothing were the giving
you

The life you've taken! But I thought
my way

The better — only for your sake and
hers:

And as you have decided otherwise,
Would I had an infinity of lives

To offer you! Now say — instruct me
— think!

Can you, from the brief minutes I have
left,

Eke out my reparation? Oh think —
think!

For I must wring a partial — dare
Forgiveness from you, ere I die?

TRESHAM.

Forgive you.

MERTOUN. Wait and ponder
great word!

Because, if you forgive me, I shall
To speak to you of — Mildred!

TRESHAM. Mertoun!

And anger have undone us. 'Tis
you

Should tell me for a novelty
young,

Thoughtless, unable to recall the
Be but your pardon ample as my

MERTOUN. Ah, Tresham, 'tis
sword-stroke and a drop

Of blood or two, should bring a
about!

Why, 'twas my very fear of you
love

Of you — (what passion like a
for one

'Like you?' — that ruined me
dreamed of you —

'You, all accomplished, courted
where,

The scholar and the gentlem
burned

To knit myself to you: but
young,

And your surpassing reputation kept
So far aloof! Oh, wherefore all
love?

With less of love, my glorious yes
Of praise and gentlest words and looks,

Had taken place perchance six months
ago.

Even now, how happy we had
And yet

I know the thought of this escape
Tresham!

Let me look up into your face; I
'Tis changed above me: yet my
are glazed.

Where? where?

*[As he endeavours to raise his
self, his eye catches the lady]*

Ah, Mildred! What will Mildred
Tresham, her life is bound up
life

That's bleeding fast away! I'll
must live, —

There, if you'll only turn me I shall
And save her! Tresham — oh, heard!

Had you but heard! What right
yours to set

The thoughtless foot upon her life
mine,

en say, as we perish, "Had I
ought,
had gone otherwise"? We've
ned and die:

you sin, Lord Tresham! for
I'll die,
and will judge you.

HAM. Yes, be satisfied!
Process is begun.

TOUN. And she sits there
for me! Now, say you this to

— another — say, I saw him die
breathed this, "I love her" —
I don't know

those three small words mean!
y; loving her

me down the bloody slope to
with

memories . . . I speak to her,
t you,

and no pity, will have no remorse,
ace intend her . . . Die along
with me,

Mildred! 'tis so easy, and you'll
ape

th unkindness! Can I lie at rest,
ade speech spoken to you, ruder
eds

to you? — heartless men shall
ve my heart,

ied down with grave-clothes and
e worm,

perhaps, of every blow — oh
d! —

those lips — yet of no power to
r

on stripe by stripe! Die, Mil-
ed! Leave

honourable world to them! For
d

good enough, though the world
its us out. [A whistle is heard]

HAM. Ho, Gerard!

GERARD, AUSTIN and GUENDO-
LEN, with lights]

ne speak! You see what's done.
t bear another voice.

TOUN. There's light —
all about me, and I move to it,

me, did I not tell you — did you
t

romise to deliver words of mine
dred?

SHAM. I will bear those words
her.

TOUN. Now?

SHAM. Now. Lift you the body,
d leave me

ad.

[As they have half raised MER-
TOUN, he turns suddenly]

MERTOUN. I knew they turned me:
turn me not from her!

There! stay you! there! [Dies]

GUENDOLEN [after a pause]. Austin,
remain you here

With Thorold until Gerard comes with
help:

Then lead him to his chamber. I must
go

To Mildred.

TRESHAM. Guendolen, I hear each
word

You utter. Did you hear him bid me
give

His message? Did you hear my
promise? I,

And only I, see Mildred.

GUENDOLEN. She will die.

TRESHAM. Oh no, she will not die!
I dare not hope

She'll die. What ground have you to
think she'll die?

Why, Austin's with you!

AUSTIN. Had we but arrived
Before you fought!

TRESHAM. There was no fight at all.
He let me slaughter him — the boy!

I'll trust

The body there to you and Gerard —
thus!

Now bear him on before me.

AUSTIN. Whither bear him?

TRESHAM. Oh, to my chamber!

When we meet there next,

We shall be friends.

[They bear out the body of MER-
TOUN]

Will she die, Guendolen?
GUENDOLEN. Where are you taking
me?

TRESHAM. He fell just here.

Now answer me. Shall you in your
whole life

— You who have nought to do with
Mertoun's fate,

Now you have seen his breast upon
the turf,

Shall you e'er walk this way if you can
help?

When you and Austin wander arm-in-
arm

Through our ancestral grounds, will
not a shade

Be ever on the meadow and the waste —
Another kind of shade than when the

night

Shuts the woodside with all its whispers
up?

But will you ever so forget his breast

As carelessly to cross this bloody turf
Under the black yew avenue? That's
well!

You turn your head: and I then? —

GUENDOLEN. What is done
Is done. My care is for the living.
Thorold,

Bear up against this burden: more re-
mains

To set the neck to!

TRESHAM. Dear and ancient trees
My fathers planted, and I loved so well!
What have I done that, like some fabled
crime

Of yore, lets loose a Fury leading thus
Her miserable dance amidst you all?
Oh, never more for me shall winds intone
With all your tops a vast antiphony,
Demanding and responding in God's
praise!

Hers ye are now, not mine! Farewell
— farewell!

SCENE SECOND. — MILDRED's chamber.

[MILDRED alone]

He comes not! I have heard of those
who seemed

Resourceless in prosperity, — you
thought

Sorrow might slay them when she listed;
yet

Did they so gather up their diffused
strength

At her first menace, that they bade her
strike,

And stood and laughed her subtlest
skill to scorn.

Oh, 'tis not so with me! The first
woe fell,

And the rest fall upon it, not on me:
Else should I bear that Henry comes
not? — fails

Just this first night out of so many
nights?

Loving is done with. Were he sitting
now,

As so few hours since, on that seat,
we'd love

No more — contrive no thousand happy
ways

To hide love from the loveless, any
more.

I think I might have urged some little
point

In my defence, to Thorold; he was
breathless

For the least hint of a defence: but no,

The first shame over, all that
might fall.

No Henry! Yet I merely sit and
The morn's deed o'er and o'er.
have crept

Out of myself. A Mildred that
Her lover — oh, I dare not look

Such woe! I crouch away from
'Tis she,

Mildred, will break her heart,
The world

Forsakes me: only Henry's left
left?

When I have lost him, for he d
come,

And I sit stupidly . . . Oh H
break up

This worse than anguish, thi
apathy,

By any means or any messenger
TRESHAM [without]. M

MILDRED. Come in! Heaven
me!

[Enter TRESHAM] You?
Oh, no more cursing!

TRESHAM. Mildred, I m
There — you sit!

MILDRED. Say it, Thorol
not look

The curse! deliver all you come
What must become of me? Oh

that thought
Which makes your brow and ch

pale!
TRESHAM. My thought?

MILDRED. All of it!

TRESHAM. How we waded —
ago —

After those water-lilies, till the p
I know not how, surprised us; a

dared
Neither advance nor turn back:

stood
Laughing and crying until

came —
Once safe upon the turf, the loud

For once more reaching the relin
prize!

How idle thoughts are, some
dying men's!

Mildred, —
MILDRED. You call me kind

my name
Than even yesterday: what is in

TRESHAM. It weighs so much
my mind that I

This morning took an office n
own!

I might . . . of course, I must
or grieved,

Content or not, at every little th

touches you. I may with a
rung heart
improve you, Mildred; I did more:
you forgive me?

MILDRED. Thorold? do you mock?
... and yet you bid me ...
y that word!

TRESHAM. Forgive me, Mildred! —
e you silent, Sweet?

MILDRED [*starting up*]. Why does
t Henry Mertoun come to-night?
u, too, silent?

[*Dashing his mantle aside, and
pointing to his scabbard, which
is empty*]

Ah, this speaks for you!
e murdered Henry Mertoun!
ow proceed!

is it I must pardon? This and
?

I do pardon you — I think I do.
d, how very wretched you must
!

TRESHAM. He bade me tell you ...
MILDRED. What I do forbid
utterance of! So much that you
ay tell

will not — how you murdered
m ... but, no!

tell me that he loved me, never
ore
bleeding out his life there: must
say

ed," to that? Enough! I pardon
ou.

TRESHAM. You cannot, Mildred! for
e harsh words, yes:

last deed Another's judge; whose
oom
in doubt, despondency and fear.

MILDRED. Oh, true! There's nought
r me to pardon! True!

ose my soul of all its cares at once.
makes me sure of him forever!

ou
e his last words? He shall tell
e them,
ake my answer — not in words,
at reading

lf the heart I had to read him
te,
death ...

TRESHAM. Death? You are
ying too? Well said

uendolen! I dared not hope
ou'd die:

he was sure of it.

MILDRED. Tell Guendolen
d her, and tell Austin ...

TRESHAM. Him you loved:
e?

MILDRED. Ah, Thorold! Was 't
not rashly done

To quench that blood, on fire with
youth and hope

And love of me — whom you loved too,
and yet

Suffered to sit here waiting his approach
While you were slaying him? Oh,

doubtlessly
You let him speak his poor confused

boy's-speech
— Do his poor utmost to disarm your

wrath
And respite me! — you let him try to

give
The story of our love and ignorance,

And the brief madness and the long
despair —

You let him plead all this, because your
code

Of honour bids you hear before you
strike:

But at the end, as he looked up for
life

Into your eyes — you struck him down!
TRESHAM. No! No!

Had I but heard him — had I let him
speak

Half the truth — less — had I looked
long on him

I had desisted! Why, as he lay there,
The moon on his flushed cheek, I

gathered all
The story ere he told it: I saw through

The troubled surface of his crime and
yours

A depth of purity immovable.

Had I but glanced, where all seemed
turbidest

Had gleamed some inlet to the calm
beneath;

I would not glance: my punishment's
at hand.

There, Mildred, is the truth! and you
— say on —

You curse me?
MILDRED. As I dare approach

that Heaven
Which has not bade a living thing

despair,
Which needs no code to keep its grace

from stain,
But bids the vilest worm that turns on it

Desist and be forgiven, — I — forgive
not,

But bless you, Thorold, from my soul
of souls! [*Falls on his neck*]

There! Do not think too much upon
the past!

The cloud that's broke was all the same
a cloud

While it stood up between my friend
and you;
You hurt him 'neath its shadow: but
is that

So past retrieve? I have his heart, you
know;

I may dispose of it: I give it you!
It loves you as mine loves! Confirm
me, Henry! [Dies]

TRESHAM. I wish thee joy, Beloved!
I am glad

In thy full gladness!

GUENDOLEN [without]. Mildred!
Tresham!

[Entering with AUSTIN] Thorold,
I could desist no longer. Ah, she
swoons!

That's well.

TRESHAM. Oh, better far than that!

GUENDOLEN. She's dead!
Let me unlock her arms!

TRESHAM. She threw them thus
About my neck, and blessed me, and
then died:

You'll let them stay now, Guendolen!

AUSTIN. Leave her
And look to him! What ails you,
Thorold?

GUENDOLEN. White
As she, and whiter! Austin! quick —
this side!

AUSTIN. A froth is oozing through
his clenched teeth;
Both lips, where they're not bitten
through, are black:

Speak, dearest Thorold!

TRESHAM. Something does weigh
down

My neck beside her weight: thanks: I
should fall

But for you, Austin, I believe! —
there, there,

'Twill pass away soon! — ah, — I had
forgotten:

I am dying.

GUENDOLEN. Thorold — Tho
why was this?

TRESHAM. I said, just as I
the poison off,

The earth would be no longer
to me,

The life out of all life was gone fr

There are blind ways provid
foredone

Heart-weary player in this p
world

Drops out by, letting the main
defile

By the conspicuous portal:
through —

Just through!

GUENDOLEN. Don't leave him
tin! Death is close.

TRESHAM. Already Mildred's
peacefuller.

I see you, Austin — feel you:
my hand,

Put yours in it — you, Gue
yours too!

You're lord and lady now —
Treshams; name

And fame are yours: you ho
'scutcheon up.

Austin, no blot on it! You s
blood

Must wash one blot away: the fi
came

And the first blood came. To t
world's eye

All's gules again: no care to th
world,

From whence the red was drawn
AUSTIN. No blot shall

TRESHAM. I said that: yet
come. Should it come,

Vengeance is God's, not man's
member me!

GUENDOLEN [letting fall the p
arm]. Ah, Thorold, we can
remember you!

THE TICKET-OF-LEAVE MAN

(1863)

BY TOM TAYLOR

TOM TAYLOR

(1817-1880)

TOM TAYLOR represents all the glaring defects of the dramatists of the Victorian age. He is the type of English playwright who readily acceded to the line of least resistance and who, taking the public taste of his time as criterion, lowered his ability in order to meet the popular demand.

In 1869, he wrote for *Every Saturday* an article on "Some Thoughts on the English Stage"; and in this article, which criticised the defects and weaknesses of the current theatre, he unconsciously illustrated exactly why his own dramas were filled with those flimsy characteristics he criticised in others. Even in that article they talked of the "palmy days" of acting, and deplored what they thought was the decline of the traditions of Garrick, Kean, and Kemble, and what they deplored were the waning powers of Macready. There were those conservatives regarded, with tremendous scepticism, the freeing of the theatres. Undoubtedly, the English stage of the 40's and 50's was dominated by a wildest imitation, where comedy — bordering on farce — and deep-dyed melodrama reigned, and improbable romance was held above subtlety of characterization. Taylor wrote:

So long as the patent theatres survived, there was a home in them for artificial comedy as for formal tragedy, and a body of actors trained to represent both with more or less finish and completeness. But the same influences, call them vulgar or democratic if you will, which were gradually modifying manners, social opinions and literature, were at work in the theatre, both to sap theatrical privilege and to new-mould theatrical amusements. The patents were broken down; all theatres were opened to all kinds of entertainments; actors became scattered; and whatever of artificial or stately in stage art had been maintained by the barriers of privilege, or the influences of tradition, began to melt away, and make room for ways of acting and forms of entertainment giving a more popular impress.

The same condition turned more minds than that of Tom Taylor on the excellencies of the French stage of this time, in comparison with the dramatic performances holding in London. He wrote of French audiences, and their ability to judge promptly the merits of a drama, in the same terms that American critics — at the height of the régime of the Theatrical Trust — talked of American performances and audiences in comparison with audiences and performances in London. The devotion to the French drama was the undoing of Tom Taylor, as it was of many of his contemporaries. For some time, the English theatre was the French theatre reduced to the lowest terms of translation.

Tom Taylor was born at Bishop-Wearmouth, a suburb of Sunderland, on September 19, 1817. His father was self-educated, and rose to financial prominence

through his brewery business. It was probably from his mother that young inherited much of his sharpness of wit and his intellectual ability. He was educated at the Grange, in Sunderland, and at the University of Glasgow. In 1832 entered Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1840, he took a Bachelor of Arts with honours in mathematics and the classics, followed, in 1842, by a Fellowship at Trinity, with an eventual Master's degree. For two years thereafter he coached at Cambridge, and, in 1845, became Professor of English in London University, studying law meanwhile at the Inner Temple. He was called to the Bar in 1846, following the Northern Circuit, and, in 1850, was Assistant Secretary of the Board of Health, becoming a full secretary in 1854, with an income of a thousand pounds a year. He remained in public position until 1871, when he retired on a pension of six hundred and fifty pounds.

From the very first he was a journalist, writing for such papers as *The Morning Chronicle* and the *Daily News*. At an early date, he became one of the contributors to *Punch*. His criticisms on art and the theatre won him considerable reputation. Yet what he earned as a literary man and as public official was nothing in comparison with the income that came to him through the rapid writing of drama. His life was one of active service in the theatre, — as active as that of Robertson. It is those who claim that both as an editor of *Punch* — for he succeeded Charles Brooks in 1874, and held the office until his death — and as writer of ten books, his scholarly attainment was continually handicapping his lighter pen and his wit. The chronicler who has written the delightful record, "The History of *Punch*", claims that when Tom Taylor became its editor, his taste was too high and his fun too scholarly, too well-ordered, too set and ponderous for the paper. He likewise states that, under the editorship of Douglas Jerrold, *Punch* was erratic, but that under the guiding hand of Tom Taylor, it became decidedly anti-Beaconsfield, and anti-Imperial.

However sedate Taylor may have been, he was a great comrade of the theatre, identified with the wit of the Victorian era. His love for the theatre began in early years; for he played in amateur theatricals, the presiding genius being Charles Dickens, assisted by the artists, John Leech and Crunkshank.

As a playwright, Tom Taylor's record is seventy or more dramas, written in more than thirty-five years. He attempted every form of amusement, leaning upon adaptation, and resorting, wherever advisable, to collaboration. "Hopes and Fears", written in conjunction with Charles Reade, was produced at market, on November 20, 1852. His "Our American Cousin" was given at Keene's Theatre, in New York, in 1858, and was the play in which Taylor won fame as *Lord Dundreary*.

It was not the highest type of literary work, the collaboration with Charles Reade and Taylor. We have the former's own testimony:

While Taylor was away at his office [he said], I wrote, and when he came back at night, he cut. Then he wrote a bit and I cut. It was a snap, and a slash. We were both pugnaeious. Taylor had the face and the pugilist, and I fear I am built that way myself, so we rowed and rowed and then fell in again.

The actors and the management were beset as to which side to take, fluctuating like the needle of a compass, until the manuscript of "Masks

made ready. But, in after years, the inevitable dispute arose as to the proper share of each author in the making of this stage success. Mr. Arnold came to his brother's rescue in the following terms:

Reade was our guest at Chiswick Lodge, and the method of writing the play was this, that during the day (my brother being in town at his office), Reade wrote long passages, which were as ruthlessly cut to pieces, or rejected, or altered, or altered by my brother, when they sat down to put together and complete their work. And morning after morning, as I well remember, when we were at breakfast, Reade used, half in sorrow, half in fun, to say to my mother, here, Mrs. Taylor, my gentleman has been at his old game. He has cut every line of that dialogue, and all those sentiments you so much admired when I read them to you yesterday afternoon."

Reade's subtle revenge took place when the time came for him to write the novel of the play; for he put into the narrative nearly everything which had been sacrificed during collaboration. Yet even then, he stood indebted to Taylor, as the introduction to the book will show: "To Tom Taylor, my friend and coadjutor in the play of 'Masks and Faces', to whom the reader owes much of the best matter in this tale."

Those who wish to carry further the association between these two will find a small gossip in John Coleman's "Charles Reade as I Knew Him." For "Masks and Faces" was not the only collaborative work done by Reade and Taylor, nor was this play the only successful attempt made by Reade for the stage. The reader is likewise referred to E. A. Sothorn's "Memoirs" for a history of the production of "Our American Cousin."

When all is told, Taylor's pride was showered not so much upon his comedies as upon what he termed his "Historical Plays", which were issued in a special edition, 1877, and which included "The Fool's Revenge", taken from Victor Hugo's "Le Roi s'Amuse" (December 19, 1869), "'Tiswixt Axe and Crown", culled from Scherman (May 22, 1870), "Joan of Arc" (April 10, 1871), "Lady Clancarty" (March 9, 1874), and "Anne Boleyn" (March, 1875). In the preface to this edition Taylor wrote:

I have no wish to screen myself from literary criticism behind the plea that these plays were meant to be acted. It seems to me that every drama submitted to the judgment of audiences should be prepared to encounter that of critics. I have in all cases acknowledged in notes attached to the plays the suggestions to which I have been indebted for the suggestions of my subjects. . . .

Taylor was continually being accused of plagiarism. These accusations he met many times over, laying claim to the legitimate use he made of other people's

In the instance of "The Fool's Revenge", which was taken from Hugo, Taylor avers that he was pushed into writing a play founded upon the libretto of the opera, "Rigoletto", and that, when he turned to Hugo, he found in "Le Roi s'Amuse" which was

wanting in dramatic motive and cohesion . . . so much that was defective in that central secret of stage effect, climax — that I determined to take the situation of the jester and his daughter, and to recast in my own way the incidents in which their story was invested.

It was about this time, — to be exact, 1871, — that a controversy arose between Taylor and the critic, "Q" (Thomas Purnell), during which the latter accused Taylor of leaning heavily on French drama, and of scarcely ever having produced original play. Many letters passed between them in the public prints, and among them a quotation by Taylor is worth while, as illustrating his point of view regarding his sources. He wrote to the editor of the *Athenæum*:

Your critic describes me as "the great foster-father of the Gallic drama," adding, that most of my plays "owe something to somebody other than myself." I think there are few plays, or books either, of which this might not be said. But as to the specific charge, which forms the staple of the article, that I am a signal offender deserving a special scourging, in the way of borrowing from the French, I wish to inform him, and any of your readers who may be curious on the matter, that out of the hundred plays, more or less, which I have given to the stage, not more than ten are derived from French sources of any kind, and that of these ten not more than half are adaptations of French dramas, the others being founded on French stories or incidents mentioned in French history or memoirs. I leave it to the judgment of any of your readers who may be conversant with the history of our stage, present or past, if this proportion of original to second-hand works supports the charge, which it seems the whole object of the article to fix upon me, of special sin in "conveying" from France and entire lack of originality.

Again, with regard to that very portion of the play which has a foreign ground-work, and in answer to most of the arguments of the article, I take liberty of reproducing here a passage from the Preface to "The Ticket-of-Leader Man."

There followed an ample quotation from the Introductory, printed elsewhere. In this way did Tom Taylor defend himself from the accusation that, as a playwright, he simply repeated the situations and characterizations invented by others. But his method was dangerous, and in many cases led him into squandering good ideas for lack of inventiveness, and encouraged in him a tendency to follow the lines of least resistance.

Among his friends may be counted George Meredith, whom he often visited at Weybridge, meeting there the painters, Millais and Watts. Later he visited Meredith at Box Hill. The novelist was an enthusiastic associate of the playwright, probably admiring him more for his biography of Benjamin Haydon than for the work he did on Leslie's "Autobiographical Recollections" and "Life of Joshua Reynolds", than for the clap-trap creation done by him for the theatre. Yet Taylor never failed to discuss with Meredith any new theatrical ideas that came into his mind. For example, he wrote of his plan for "Lady Clancarty; or, Wood and Wood", receiving from Meredith encouragement and warning — a warning which was a great novelist's indirect criticism of the entire Victorian school of drama. Meredith always expected the stage to look deep into the wells of human nature.

Box Hill, Dorking, November 18, 1871

My dear Tom, — How I envy you the new subject you have chosen. It has been ringing through me all the morning. I feel like a man who has been introduced to the beautiful woman of a friend, and found her incomparable.

for him himself, and all he can do is to cry out in honesty — take warning. You don't espouse her within a fortnight, and further, if even then you don't do justice to her, positive and spiritual, I feel myself released from the obligation to respect your claims, I will challenge your reputation, and I will beat you forthwith, in contempt of you.

Why not first write the story, and then dramatize it? It would make as good a story as striking a drama. For the latter it has every splendid and every quality. Oh! you happy fellow. But be worthy of your luck. Let me delay you, — I repeat my first warning.

What I just fear is, that you will make the brother a villain. Give him some better ground of action, drop villainy. There is here a chance of lending the play a touch of old tragedy of the classic idea. For this purpose of course you must heighten the hero's character, and have him to be more than a simple champion of horse. Jacobitism could hardly inspire him: the sense of fealty to a race, and it might give occasion to put stress on the ancient notion of loyalty to a race in a young man's heart — inherited. The brother then, pleading for law, order, and the like, might think the State had reason to dread the youth. The sister would take the woman's view. Then you have the play in a perfect triangle, fit for your best powers, — or mine.

I leave the above only to throw you a modest hint from your hasty outline. — Ever
lovingly yours,

George Meredith.

Like the dramatists of Taylor's ilk had very little high-ground for action in his plays; they were believers in nothing so deeply based as Meredith's proposal. Order, consistency were farthest from their minds.

"The Ticket-of-Leave Man", selected for inclusion in the present collection, was played at the London Olympic Theatre, May 27, 1863, and the following year at the Winter Garden, in New York.

It is said that for the manuscript of this play, which held the English stage so many years, and reaped a fortune for the many concerned in its success, Taylor received the munificent sum of one hundred and fifty pounds, out of which he had to pay a literary hack for the rough translation from the French original of Briseval and Nuz. The play stands as one of the typical melodramas of the Victorian age, and if it is taken in contrast with Galsworthy's "Justice", we can judge how far technique and purpose and inventiveness have advanced, and how unreal are the present psychologies of crime drama, as conceived from the French, when placed on the side of studied realism, centred on a situation deep-grounded in social responsibility. To this day, *Detective Hawkshaw* retains the vitality which would thrill a strict telegraph boy. But *Sherlock Holmes* goes him one better in subtlety and consistency. In measuring Taylor's play, however, one must recollect that to Victorian audiences its sham sentiments were taken seriously. There are in our day now and then attempts at realism. Yet Taylor slipped from drama to melodrama in the progress of a scene as readily as he passed from *you* to *thou* in a line of dialogue. The narrative quality of the play is better than its theatricalism, and its varied characterization is not so bad.

Like the present generation Tom Taylor, who died on July 12, 1880, is probably known down for his poetic lines on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, published in *the* *Illustrated* *London* *News*, on May 6, 1865, and beginning "You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's

bier." But to his own contemporaries he was an acknowledged genius, with a variety of claims on the respect and admiration of his co-workers. Archer thought that from the commendable qualities of Tom Robertson and Tom Taylor one dramatist could have been made. As "Q" claimed, all of Taylor's dramas possessed personality and individual marks of distinction. But they were written without studied attention to the wants of the audience of the time.

THE TICKET-OF-LEAVE MAN

A DRAMA, IN FOUR ACTS

By TOM TAYLOR, Esq.

INTRODUCTORY

I HAVE to thank Mr. Emden for his aid and superintendence as manager, and all the actors concerned in this drama for the large part of the success of the play, which is due to the excellent acting of every one engaged in it. I owe extra thanks to Mr. Horace Wigan for his intelligent labours as stage-manager.

Mr. Neville gives great force to the part of *Brierly* by his unstaginess, the general truth as well as force of his impersonation, and, in particular, by the excellence of his north-country dialect, which is essential to the proper representation of the part.

Actors of this character should bear in mind that any staginess or stiltedness would be fatal to its effect.

As much has been said *apropos* of this drama, on the subject of originality in play writing, I wish to submit here a few remarks on this matter. As regards the present play, all credit for the invention of the story belongs to MM. Brisebarre and Nuz, the authors both of "*Les Drame de la Vie*", and of the drama of "*Leonard*", founded, as well as "*The Ticket-of-Leave Man*", on "*Le Retour de Melun*", on the *drame* in question. But here my obligation to the French authors ends. The dialogue is my own. I have made the personages in the play, its sentiments, its action English, and I claim, on this ground, some, at least, of the rights of the creator. I have always conceived that the dramatist is at liberty to take his subjects where he pleases, whether from life, from history, or from fiction. Scarcely a subject treated, in the drama or in romance, but has roots in something besides the author's personal invention or observation. In this free appropriation of subject-matter, if in nothing else, the puniest playwright, who adapts a novel or a predecessor's piece, may claim fellowship with Shakespeare. No one borrows his subjects so freely and widely as the great master of all dramatists; he did not scruple to lay under contribution even the plays of earlier English writers, casting them, and giving the breath of his own life to their dead bones. I admit at the same time, that it is perfectly fair that the sources from which an author derives his subject should be stated; and it is fair, also, that a dramatist who borrows his subject, as well as the dramatic dress of it, should receive the additional credit which his inventive faculty deserves.

I have invented many of my subjects; I have borrowed several; in my principal plays, I have invariably mentioned the source to which I am indebted for my subjects. Of my longer comedies and dramas, "*Victims*", "*The Unequal Match*", "*The Contested Election*", "*The Overland Route*", "*Payable on Demand*", "*Helping Hands*", "*The Babes in the Wood*", and "*The American Cousin*" are strictly my own invention — subjects as well as treatment. In the case of other pieces, "*Plot and Passion*", "*Masks and Faces*", "*The King's Rival*", "*Two Loves and a Life*", I have worked in partnership, but may claim, at least, half the honour of invention, as well as dramatic treatment. In others, as "*Still Waters Run Deep*", "*Retribution*", "*The House and the Home*", and "*The Fool's Revenge*", I have

on themes supplied by the plays or novels of others. But wherever I have
is, I maintain that comparison of my work with that on which it is founded
w that I have nowhere confined myself to the functions of a mere reproducer
r men's thoughts in another language, but that I have thought for myself,
grafted dramatic shoots of my own growing upon the stocks which I have
anted.

tly, I may express my belief, however startling the avowal may be thought,
ere has been no period, for the last two centuries, in which invention and ac-
ave been more conspicuous in the dramatic field than during the thirty or
ears which include the epoch of such dramatists as Miss Mitford, Sheridan
es, Bulwer-Lytton, James White, Jerrold, Browning, G. Darley, Searle,
n, Horne, Lovell, Troughton, Bell, Mrs. Gore, Sullivan, Peake, Poole,
Planché, Charles and George Dance, the Mortons, Mark Lemon, Buckstone,
Fitzball (who, whatever may be the literary quality of his plays, has given
ee of genuine romantic invention), Bernard, Coyne, Oxenford, Shirley
Watts, Phillips, and those peculiar products of our own time, the burlesque
like the Brothers Brough, and Messrs. Byron and Burnand.

T. Taylor.

ler Sweep,

dsworth, June, 1863.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<i>Olympic Theatre, London, 1863</i>	<i>Winter Garden New York, 1863</i>
ROBERT BRIERLY	<i>a Lancashire Lad</i> Mr. H. Neville	Mr. W. J. Flor
JAMES DALTON	<i>alias Downey,</i> <i>alias The Tiger</i> Mr. Atkins	Mr. A. H. Dav
HAWKSHAW	<i>a Detective</i> Mr. Horace Wigan	Mr. Hagan
MELTER MOSS	Mr. G. Vincent	Mr. Bland
GREEN JONES	Mr. R. Soutar	Mr. V. Bowers
MR. GIBSON	<i>a Bill Broker</i> Mr. Maclean	Mr. Hind
SAM WILLOUGHBY	Miss Raynham	Mrs. Floyd
MALTBY	Mr. H. Cooper	Mr. T. Morris
BURTON	Mr. Franks	Mr. Smith
MAY EDWARDS	Miss Kate Saville	Mrs. Chanfrau
EMILY ST. EVREMOND	Miss Hughes	Mrs. W. J. Flo
MRS. WILLOUGHBY	Mrs. Stephens	Mrs. Hind

GUESTS, NAVVIES, &c.

Time — The Present Day — An interval of three years and a half between the First and Second Acts, and intervals of six and four months between the Second and Third and Last Acts, respectively.

THE TICKET-OF-LEAVE MAN

ACT I

E. — The Bellevue Tea Gardens, in the south-west Suburbs of London. Summer evening. Front of the Tavern with ornamental verandah; Arbours along the stage, with tables and seats; trees, shrubs, statues, etc. At the back, with ornamental orchestra and concert room.

PARTIES, male and female, seated at the different tables; WAITERS serving refreshments. Music heard off. As the curtain rises the parties are heard giving their orders; MALTBY moving about with an eye to the GUESTS, WAITERS, etc.; two DETECTIVES at table.]

PARTY. Three hots with —
WAITER [serving another table].
sir. — Brandy and soda for you,

PARTY. Tea for four — shrimps and muffin.

WAITER. Coming! [Serving another table]
[Pot of half-and-half for you, sir. DETECTIVE'S table] Two Sherry, two shillings. [Takes money]
MALTBY [moving about]. Now, sir, three teas and a muffin in 5. —
son, money in 6. [To a GUEST] Common thirsty weather, sir, un-
son. [To another party] If I
recommend a cobbler for the
sir, delicious refreshment for
Now, James, look after them
lies in 3. [Moves off]

er HAWKSHAW; he strolls carelessly
to the DETECTIVES' table, then in
an undertone and without looking
at them]

HAWKSHAW. Report.

DETECTIVE. [In same tone and
not looking at HAWKSHAW] All

HAWKSHAW. [Same tone] Here's old
s. Keep an eye on him.

[Strolls off]

[Enter MOSS, — sits at table]

MOSS. [To the WAITER] Good evening, James. Four penn'orth of brandy, if you please, James. [Sits in chair] And a little peppermint. [Coughs and looks around] Tiger not here yet.

[Bell rings]

MALTBY. The concert bell, ladies and gentlemen — in the Rotunda. [Pointing to the concert room] The first talent — selections from the best classical music, and original nigger melodies. This way.

[Exit MALTBY, towards concert room. —
Most of the parties move off, leaving
DETECTIVES, and a GUEST here
and there]

[Enter DALTON]

MOSS [stirring and sipping his brandy and peppermint]. Warm and comfortable. Tiger ought to be here before this. [As he stirs, his eye falls on the spoon; he takes it up, weighs it in his fingers] Uncommon neat article — might take in a good many people — plated, though, plated.

[While MOSS is looking at the spoon, DALTON takes his seat at MOSS's table, unobserved by him]

DALTON. Not worth flimping, eh?

MOSS [starting, but not recognizing him]. Eh, did you speak to me, sir?

DALTON. What? don't twig me? Then it is a good get up. [He lifts his hat, and gives him a peculiar look] Eh, Melter?

MOSS [recognizing him]. What, Tiger!

DALTON. Stow that. There's no tigers here. My name's Downy; you mind that. John Downy, from Rotherham, jobber and general dealer.

MALTBY [coming down to DALTON]. Now, sir, what can I have the pleasure of ordering you, sir?

DALTON. My good friend, Mr. Moss here, insists on standing a bottle of sherry.

MOSS. *[In alarm]* No, no!

DALTON. What, you will make it champagne? very well, I'm not proud. *[To MALTBY]* I like it dry, mind, and none of your home-brewed; I buy my rhubarb-juice at the greengrocer's.

[Exit MALTBY]

MOSS. Come, Ti— *[DALTON gives him a look, which stops him]* A joke's a joke. But a bottle of real champagne at ten and six —

DALTON. That's serious, eh? Well, I've taken a serious turn; always do when it's low tide here.

[Pointing to his pocket]

MOSS. Down on your luck, eh?

DALTON *[shrugs his shoulder]*. The Crushers are getting to know too much; then there's the Nailer's been after me.

MOSS. What, Hawkshaw, the 'cutest detective in the force?

DALTON. He's taken his oath on the Bow Street Office testament to be square with me for that Peckham job —

[Hesitates]

MOSS. Ah!

DALTON. When I spoiled his mate.

[Shrugs his shoulders]

MOSS *[shaking his head]*. Ah, I always said that life preserver of yours would be doing somebody a mischief.

[Re-enter MALTBY, with champagne and glasses]

DALTON. Hush, here's the tippie.

MALTBY *[at back of table, uncorking and pouring out]*. And though I say it, there ain't a better bottle opened at Buckingham Palace. Ten an' six, Mr. Moss — there's a colour — there's a bouquet!

MOSS *[grumbling as he pays]*. There ought to be at the price.

MALTBY *[going up]*. Now, Jackson, take orders in the Rotunda.

[Exit MALTBY]

DALTON *[drinking]*. Ah, tidy swizzle!

MOSS. And so you're keeping dark, eh?

DALTON. Yes, pottering about on the sneak, flimping or smashing a little when I get the chance; but the Nailer's too hard on me. There's no picking up a gentlemanly livelihood. Hang me, if I haven't often thought of turning respectable.

MOSS. No, no; it ain't so bad as

that yet. *[Looking around, and speaking cautiously]* Now, I have the kindest lot of Bank of England flip that ever came out of Birmingham. It's the safest paper to work, and should have it cheap, dirt cheap, credit till you'd planted it.

DALTON. And how about the gingham! If I'm nailed it's a lifer.

MOSS. Bless you, I wouldn't you chance it; but in the high so you keep, you could surely pick a flat to put off the paper.

DALTON. I've the very man gave him an appointment here, this evening.

MOSS. Did you, though? How things come about! Who is he?

DALTON. A Lancashire lad; only son, he tells me. The old man spoiled him as long as they lived, him a few hundreds, and now he's the collar over his head, and is kicking 'em down, seeing life. *[Laughs]* Life in London ain't to be seen, without paying at the doors, eh, Melter?

MOSS. Ha, ha, ha! and you're ringing him the bill of the play.

DALTON. I'm putting him up with thing or two — cards, skittles, billiards, sporting houses, sparring houses, raffles, houses, casinos — every short cut to the devil and the bottom of a man's purse. He's as green as a leek, as soft as new cheese, no vice, still to ride or drive, and runs in a snaffle.

[Laughs]

MOSS *[rising]*. Oh, beautiful! *[Rubs his hands]* It would be a sin to drop such a beautiful partnership! Suppose we pumped him into partnership?

DALTON. Thank you, I know the partnership articles, — me all the king's shilling and you all the half-pence. But he can work him to plant a lot of the flimsies of yours, I don't mind; member, though, I won't go higher than fifteen bob for a fiver.

MOSS. What, only fifteen bob! such beauties, too, they'd take in the Bank chairman — fifteen! I'd be sure to chance it myself! Only fifteen — robbery.

DALTON. Take it or leave it.

[Takes up the newspaper, and sits at table]

MOSS. I must take a turn, and take it over. *[Going, returns]* I'll bring the flimsies. Come, you'll allow a pound?

DALTON. Bid me down again, and
and on ten shillings—now you
It's like it or lump it.

[He returns to his paper]
[holding up his hands]. Oh,
oh, dear! What it is to deal with
that have no consciences!

[Exit]
BRIERLY. [Heard off] A bottle of
champaigne, lad, and half a dozen
glasses—and look sharp!
DALTON [looking up from paper].
My pigeon!

BRIERLY; he looks feverish and
dishevelled, and is dressed in an
aggravated sporting style. DALTON
lays the paper down.]

Bob! up to time as usual!
BRIERLY. Aye! nobody shall say
Brierly craned while he could keep
eng. [WAITER brings champagne
glasses] Here—you—a clean glass
my friend.

DALTON [pointing to Moss's bottle].
Had my whack already.

BRIERLY. Nay, lad, you can find
for another glass.

[WAITER brings another glass—
BRIERLY pours out wine]

My heart into a chap! [Drinks
] I've nearly lived on 't this
right past.

DALTON [stops his hand]. Take
Bob, or we shall have you in
doctor's hands.

BRIERLY. Doctor? Nay; I'm as
as a pebble and as steele as a
[Fills DALTON's glass with a
good hand] Curse the glass! Here
take, man, drink. I can't abear
being single handed. I like com-
—always did. [Looking round
] And now, I don't know
what it is—[Nervously looking down
at the table] No, no, it's nothing!
I have a weed. [Offers cigar]

DALTON. I'll take a light from you.
DALTON lights his cigar at BRIERLY's,
taking of BRIERLY's hand becomes
apparent] Come, come, Master
you're getting shaky—this won't

BRIERLY. It's that waking—wak-
—If I could only sleep. [Earnestly]
man—can't you help a chap to a
night's rest? I used to sleep
top down at Glossop. But in
great big place, since I've been
engaging myself, seeing life—I don't
—[Passing his hand across his

eyes] I don't know how it is—I get
no rest—and when I do, it's worse
than none—there's great black crawl-
ing things about me. [Gulps down a
glass of wine] I say, Downy; do you
know how a chap feels when he's going
mad?

DALTON. I know the symptoms of
del. trem. pretty well—sit down, sit
down. First and foremost [Puts him
a chair] I prescribe a devilled biscuit
—I'll doctor one for you. [Calling]
Waiter! a plate of biscuits, toasted
hot—butter and cayenne. [BRIERLY
hides his head in his hands—aside,
looking at him contemptuously] The
horrors! ah, he's seen too much of
life lately—Bob, are you in cash?

BRIERLY. Well, cleaned out—I've
written to the lawyer-chap, down at
Glossop—him that's got all my prop-
erty to manage, yo' know—for more
brass.

DALTON. [Aside] Now, if I'd a few
of Moss's fivers—here's a chance.—
You must bank with me till the brass
comes. Delighted to lend you a sover-
eign—five—ten—as much as you
want.

[Enter Moss]

BRIERLY. Nay, will yo' though?
That's friendly of you. Here's luck
—and sink the expense!

[He pours out wine, standing in
front of table]

MOSS. [Aside to DALTON] I've got
the flimsies.—I'll do it at seven ten.

DALTON. [Aside] Fork over.

MOSS. [Aside, giving him a roll of
notes] There's fifty to begin with—
twenty, a tenner, and four fives. Plant
the big 'un first.

[Enter HAWKSHAW; meets MOSS at back
of chair—approaches the table where
the DETECTIVES are—one of them
nods towards MOSS and DALTON]

MOSS. Good evening, gentleman,
you'll find my friend, Mr. Downy,
excellent company, sir. Very improv-
ing for a young man from the country.
[Aside] That's an honestly earned
seven-pun-ten! [Exit MOSS]

[WAITER brings biscuits and cayenne]

DALTON. Now, for your devil,
Master Bob. [As he prepares the
biscuit, HAWKSHAW approaches the table,
and takes up the paper which DALTON
has put down—DALTON pushes the
biscuit across to BRIERLY] Try that!

HAWKSHAW. Beg pardon, sir, but if the paper's not in hand —

[Sits at back of table]

DALTON [rudely, and pocketing the note hastily]. Eh — sir?

HAWKSHAW [sitting down coolly at the table and unfolding the paper]. Papers very dull lately, don't you think 'so, sir?

DALTON [assuming a country dialect]. I never trouble 'em much, sir, except for the Smithfield Market List, in the way of business.

HAWKSHAW. Ah, much my own case. They put a fellow up to the dodges of the town, though: for instance, these cases of bad notes offered at the Bank lately.

[Watching him close]

DALTON. I never took a bad note in my life.

HAWKSHAW. You've been lucky — in the Smithfield line, too, I think you said. In the jobbing way, may I ask, sir, or in the breeding?

DALTON. Sometimes one, and sometimes t'other — always ready to turn the nimble shilling.

HAWKSHAW. My own rule.

DALTON. May I ask your business?

HAWKSHAW. The fancy iron trade. My principle is, to get as much of my stock on other people's hands as I can. From the country, I think?

DALTON. Yes, Yorkshire.

HAWKSHAW. Ah! I'm Durham myself; and this young gent?

BRIERLY. What's that to you? [Pushing away the biscuit] It's no use — I can't swallow a morsel.

HAWKSHAW. From Lancashire, I see; why, we are quite neighbours when we are at home — and neighbours ought to be neighbourly in this overgrown city, so I hope you'll allow me to stand treat — give it a name, gentlemen.

DALTON [roughly]. Thank you, I never drink with strangers.

BRIERLY. They've a saying down in Glossop, where I came from, If you want a welcome, wait to be axed.

HAWKSHAW. Ah, quite right to be cautious about the company you keep, young man. Perhaps I could give you a bit of good advice —

BRIERLY. Thank ye! I'm not in the way o' takin' good advice.

HAWKSHAW. Well, don't take bad; and you won't easy find a worse adviser than your thieving companion here.

DALTON [firing up]. Eh? what you mean by that?

HAWKSHAW. Not you, sir. [Tapping the champagne bottle] This gentleman here. He robs people of their brains — their digestions — and their conscience — to say nothing of their money. But since you won't allow me to stand anything —

DALTON. And wish to keep ourselves to ourselves.

BRIERLY. And think your room deal better than your company, meanin' no offence you know.

HAWKSHAW [rises]. Not in least. If gentlemen can't please themselves in a public establishment! wish you a very good evening. [As A plant, — I'll keep an eye on 'em]

DALTON. [Aside] I don't half the look of that fellow. There's something about his eye — I must make out if Moss knows him — Bob, you excuse me for five minutes?

BRIERLY. Don't be long — I can't bear my own company.

DALTON. I've only a word to say to a customer.

[HAWKSHAW re-appears, waits]

DALTON off and follows after a moment's interval]

BRIERLY [goes to chair]. And try to sleep till he comes back. I could only sleep without dreaming. I never close my eyes but I'm bothered at Glossop wi' the old folks at home — 't mother fettlin' about me, as used when I was a brat — and fat stroking my head, and callin' me bonny boy — noa, noa — I must think o' them — not here — or I shall go mad.

[Sinking his head in his hands and sobbing]

[Music — other GUESTS come and sit at the other tables]

[Enter MALTBY]

MALTBY. Now then, James! James, take orders. Interval of five minutes allowed for refreshment. Give your orders, gents, give your orders. The nigger melodists will shortly commence their unrivalled entertainment preliminary to the orchestral selection from Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*.

[Enter MAY EDWARDS with her guests — The WAITERS move about, bringing refreshments to tables]

If they'll only let me sing to—
[*Tuning guitar*]
BRY. Halloo, halloo! what's
Oh, it's you, is it, Edwards?
I'm glad to see you're about
but I can't have you cadging

Oh, Mr. Maltby, if you'll
allow me to try one song, and go
after it, I'll stop as soon as ever
sing up.

BRY. Well, well, you was always
behaved girl, so, for once in a

Oh, thank you, thank you,
you should have an opening for
the room, sir, when I'm quite
again —

BRY. No chance of it, we're
full — a glut of talent; but if
I be able to find room for you
chorus, and to double Miss
enent when she's in the tantrums,
lings a week, and find your own
oe, you know — I'm not the
shrink from a generous action.
en, Jackson, money in 4.

[*Exit MALTBY*]

MAY sings¹

aisies blow and waters glide,
cottage stands beside
owly brook that flows along
y banks with murmuring song.
r the door there grows a tree,
that scarce the cot you see,
ens and shades my still retreat
inter's cold and Summer's heat;
re, at eve, a nightingale
concealed and tell its tale —
, that all who wander by
to stop, and listen nigh.
ntle child, with golden hair,
ong I've watched with love and care,
d is cold, and rough for thee,
t thou come and dwell with me?

After her song she goes round the
tables; all repulse her]

PARTY. The concert's quite
without catterwauling between
us.

PARTY. We've no small change,
Waiter! bottle pale sherry!

PARTY. Be off!

PARTY. Now then, what's the
ping at? Can't you take an
?

[*To BRIERLY*] Please, sir —

BRIERLY. Be off with thee, lass.
no mood for music.

MAY [*suppressing her tears*]. Not a
penny!

BRIERLY. Stop, lass; [*Feels in his
pocket*] not a farden. Where's Downy?
Come here, what'st crying at?

MAY. I've not taken anything to-
day, and I've not been well lately.

[*She turns faint and grasps a seat
to support herself*]

BRIERLY [*rising*]. Poor thing!
here, [*Places chair*] sit thee down;
why, thee looks welly clemmed. Try
and eat a bit. [*He gives her a biscuit*]

MAY. Thank you, sir, you're very
kind. [*She tries to swallow but cannot*]
If I had a drink of water.

BRIERLY. Wather? [*At back of
table*] Nay, a sup o' this will hearten
thee up. [*Tries to give her wine from
his bottle*] Not a drop! [*He looks
around and sees WAITER crossing,
bringing a decanter of sherry*] Here,
that'll do. [*Takes decanter*]

WAITER. Beg pardon, sir, it's for
No. 1.

BRIERLY. I'se No. 1.

1ST PARTY. Hollo, sir! that's my
sherry.

BRIERLY. No, it's mine.

1ST PARTY. I'll let you know. [*He
rises and turns up his cuffs; BRIERLY
looks at him*] — No, I'll see the landlord.

[*Exit 1ST PARTY*]

BRIERLY. There, lass. [*Pours out a
glass for MAY*] Sup that.

MAY [*drinks*]. It's wine.

BRIERLY. Sup it up.

MAY. It makes me so warm.

BRIERLY. It'll put some heart i'
thee. Sup again, thou't tune thy
pipes like a mavis on that. Now try
and eat a bit.

MAY. Oh, sir, you're too good.

BRIERLY. Good? me! nay —

[*Enter MALTBY, followed by 1ST PARTY*]

MALTBY [*soothingly*]. Merely a
lark, depend upon it. The gentleman
will apologize. [*To BRIERLY*] The
gent who ordered that bottle of
sherry —

BRIERLY. Let him ordther another;
I'll pay for it.

MALTBY. The gent can't say fairer.
[*Calls*] Bottle sherry, Jackson; seven
and six, sir.

BRIERLY. Here. [*Feels in his
pockets*] Eh? score it down.

MALTBY. We ain't in the habit of scoring, sir, not to strangers.

BRIERLY. Then yo'd betther begin; my name's Bob Brierly.

MALTBY. Your name may be Bob Brierly, sir, or Bob Anybody, sir, but when people take wine in this establishment, sir—especially other party's wine—they pay for it.

[DALTON re-appears]

BRIERLY. A tell yo'—I'll pay as soon as my friend comes back.

MALTBY. Oh, your friend! A regular case of bilk—

BRIERLY. Now yo' take care.

[Firing up; the parties gather round from tables]

MAY [frightened]. Oh, please, sir, please, Mr. Maltby.

1ST PARTY. It's too bad.

2D PARTY. Why can't you pay the man?

3D PARTY. Police!

DALTON [coming forward]. Holloa! what's all this?

BRIERLY [seizing him]. Here, Downy, you lend me a sovereign to pay this chap.

DALTON. Sorry I haven't change, but we'll manage it directly. [To MALTBY] It's all right. I'll be bail for my friend here.

MALTBY. Your word's quite enough, sir. Any friend of Mr. Moss's—

DALTON. Come, Bob, don't be a fool; take a turn and cool yourself. [Drawing him off; aside] Now to plant the big 'un. [Draws him off]

MALTBY. [To GUESTS] Sorry for this disturbance, gents, quite out of keeping with the character of my establishment. [Bell—Music, piano] But the concert is about to recommence; that way, gents, to the Rotunda. [GUESTS go off—Fiercely to MAY] This is all along of your cadging, Edwards, sitting down to drink with a promiscuous party.

MAY. Oh, I'm so sorry—he never thought—it was all his kindness.

MALTBY [sneeringly]. Kindness! much kindness he'd have showed you, if you'd been old and ugly. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

MAY [indignantly]. You ought to be ashamed of yourself! it is cruel in you to insult a helpless and friendless girl like me.

MALTBY. Insult! ho, ho, ha, here's a lark! A half-starved street-singer

cheeking me in my own establishment. You'd better apply for an engager you had, on the first vacancy. [Looks off] Hollo! what's that? carriage party! Heavy swells on the lark, ties and pink bonnets! Show ladies and gentleman to the Rotunda, Jackson.

MAY [sinks down at one of the tables]. I'm foolish to be angry, bread depends on such as he. I could only get away from this work! if some kind lady would take me in. I'm quick at my needle; who'd take me, a vagabond, without a friend to speak for me? I'm all the world now. It's strange people's life is made for 'em. I see so many girls, nicely dressed, well brought up, with parents to love and care for. I can't bear it sometimes, to see them and then think what I am, and what I was before me. [Puts her hand to her forehead] I'm a silly girl: it's all because I'm so weak from the fever. There's nothing like keeping a good lover. How good he was to me; it was through me he got into this trouble, but I mustn't think of him. [Looking off] there's a pleasant looking party yonder. Come along, old friend, you've to earn my supper yet.

[Takes her guitar and goes]

[Enter GREEN JONES and EMILY ST. EVREMOND—he wears evening dress, tume, black, white tie, Gibus, etc.; she is gaily dressed, bonnet, etc.]

GREEN [speaking as he comes down]. Excuse me, Emily! Anything but the Rotunda; if your mama likes the Rotunda, let her enjoy it.

EMILY. I'm sure the music's nice, Mr. Jones.

GREEN. Mr. Jones, Miss St. Evremond! What have I done to be at arm's length by that chevarier frise of a mister? was it for this that I thawed the thick-ribbed ice of Traddles?

EMILY. Thick-ribbed ain't a proper word to use to any lady, and I don't give you my ma's name ain't Traddles. Mr. Jones; it's the same as Miss St. Evremond; she's changed it a little.

GREEN. I beg pardon of your honor, [Sits] Mrs. St. Evremond Traddles; but I repeat, was it not called Mister Jones that I treated

and her chyild to the Star and
and her chyild without Mrs. E.
rafalgar, where from the moon-
ny that overhung the fragrant
e watched together the sunset
Isle of Dogs?

. And very wrong it was of
go to that whitebait dinner
ma; and precious she blew
bout it, though I told her you
have treated me with more
if I'd been a countess instead
phée.

N. Emily, you only did me
My intentions are honourable.
re in the ballet, that's no reason
ouldn't be a dear, good girl.
been a trump of a daughter;
see why you shouldn't turn
ump of a wife. Emily, accept
d.

. Nonsense, Green, you don't

N. I'm perfectly serious. My
d my heart, my fortune and
re. Don't stare, Emily. It's
as that my name is Green.
ce in earnest — I am indeed.

. Oh! Green, dear, I'm in
tation. [Rises]

N. We will spend a rosy exist-
You like life, and I flatter myself
stand it.

. And don't I? I call this
he music and the company,
singing and the trapèze. I
the man must break his neck.
beautiful.

N. Yes, I like to associate
classes. "Survey mankind,"

ow, Emily — "from China" —
henware. So, when Charley
proposed a night at the tea

I sank the swell; and here
with Emily and her mama.

didn't seem to see the parient;
Propriety, Charley my boy,"

and he submitted with a sigh.
w what will you have? [Re-

AY, — she begins to sing] Oh!

g but that. Now, do oblige
shutting up, that's a good girl.

. No, no, poor thing. Let
; she has a sweet voice.

N. Flat, decidedly.

. [contemptuously]. You're

. Give me half a crown for her.
N [gives one; she asks by
for another]. Two? Such a
shall have to change a note
ar.

EMILY. You'll have to change a
good many notes when we are married.
[To MAY] Come along, you shall have
both half crowns.

[Exeunt GREEN JONES and EMILY,
as MAY is following]

[Enter BRIERLY]

BRIERLY. Downy not here? He
said I was to bring t' brass to our table.

MAY [recognises him; comes down].
'Tis he! [Joyously] Oh, sir, I'm so
sorry —

BRIERLY. Why, it's t' singin' lass.
[Crosses to her] I say, have you seen
my friend?

MAY. No, sir.

BRIERLY. And where's t' landlord.
Here's that'll make him civil enough.

[Shews a number of sovereigns in
his hand]

MAY. Oh, what a lot of money!

BRIERLY. Brass for a twenty pound
note. I got it changed at t' cigar
shop down t' road. He's a good 'un
is Downy — lends me whatever I want.
Here yo' landlord. Hoy!

[Enter MALTBY]

MALTBY. Coming! Coming! [Rec-
ognising BRIERLY] Oh, it's you.

BRIERLY [flinging a half sovereign
to MALTBY]. There; seven and six is
for t' wine, and t' other half crown's
for t' thrashin' I owe you.

[Approaches him threateningly]

MALTBY [pocketing the money and
retreating]. Take care — I'll teach you
to insult a respectable licensed victualler.

[To MAY, who tries to calm BRIERLY]
And you too, you tramp, I'll have you
locked up for annoying my customers.

How do I know my spoons are safe?

BRIERLY. Thou cur!

[He breaks away from MALTBY,
who escapes, crying "Police!"]

MAY. I can't bear you should trouble
for me, indeed, sir.

[Concealing her tears]

BRIERLY. Nay, never heed that
muck-worm. Come, dry thine eyes.

Thou's too soft for this life o' thine.

MAY [apologetically]. It's the fever,
I think, sir — I usedn't to mind unkind
looks and words much once.

BRIERLY. Here, take this, [Puts
money into her hand] and stay thee
quiet at home till thou'st i' fettle
again.

MAY. Two sovereigns! oh, sir! [Cries]

BRIERLY. Nay, thou'lt make better

use o' t' brass than me — What, cryin' again! come, come, never heed that old brute; hard words break no bones, yo' know.

MAY. It's not his hard words I'm crying for now, sir.

BRIERLY. What then?

MAY. Your kind ones — they're harder to bear — they sound so strange to me.

BRIERLY. Poor thing! heaven help thee — thou mindest me of a sister I lost; she'd eyes like thine, and hair, and much t' same voice, nobbut she favert redder i' t' face, and spoke broader. I'd be glad whiles to have a nice gradely lass like you to talk to.

MAY. But where I live, sir, it's a very poor place, and I'm by myself, and —

BRIERLY [*hesitates*]. No, no — you're right — I couldn't come there, but I'm loth to lose sight of yo' too.

[*Enter DALTON hastily*]

DALTON. Briery!

BRIERLY. Here's t' change — I've borrowed five o' the twenty.

DALTON. All right, now let's be off — I've a cab outside.

BRIERLY. [*To MAY*] Mind, if you want a friend, write to Bob Briery, at the Lancashire Arms, Air-street, yo'll not forget.

MAY. Never — I'll set it down [*Aside*] in my heart!

DALTON. Come!

BRIERLY. And yo', tell me yo'r name — will yo'?

MAY. May Edwards.

DALTON. Confound your billing and cooing — come!

[*As BRIERLY follows DALTON, HAWKSHAW and two of the DETECTIVES appear*]

HAWKSHAW. You're wanted.

DALTON. [*Aside*] The crushers! Run, Bob!

[*Music — DALTON attempts to escape — DETECTIVES detain BRIERLY — HAWKSHAW seizes DALTON — in the scuffle, DALTON's hat and wig are knocked off*]

HAWKSHAW. I know you, James Dalton!

DALTON [*starting*]. Ah!

HAWKSHAW. Remember the Peckham job.

DALTON. The Nailer! Hit out, Bob!

[BRIERLY has been wrestling the two DETECTIVES; as TON speaks he knocks one down]

BRIERLY. I have! Some o' garottin' chaps!

MAY [*cries*]. Help! help!

[*Wringing her hands*]

[*A fierce struggle — DALTON escapes from HAWKSHAW — throws him — he draws a knife — DALTON strikes him — with a life-preserver and his escape through the trap-door — BRIERLY is overpowered and handcuffed — GUESTS re-enter and form Tableau*]

END OF ACT FIRST

ACT II

SCENE. — *The Room occupied by EDWARDS in MRS. WILLOUGHBY House, humbly but neatly furnished with flowers in the window; a work-stool; door communicating with the bedroom; door leading to the kitchen; case; guitar hanging against the wall; needlework on the table.*

MAY discovered with a birdcage on the table, arranging a piece of needlework and groundsel between the sofa; chiffonier; American clock.

MAY. There, Goldie, I must finish your breakfast, though I care a bit for my own. Ah! you're singing a better trade than I did. Little rogue. I'm sure I shall hear letter from Robert this morning. All his letters here. [*Takes out a letter from her work-box*] How he has improved in his handwriting since first. [*Opening letter*] That's more than three years back. Oh! what an old woman I'm getting! It's no denying it, Goldie. [*To her birdcage*] You'll be quiet, like a good, well-tamed canary. I'll read you Robert's letter. [*Reads*] "Portland, Feb. 25th, 1860. My own dearest Mary. [*Kissing it*] As the last year slipped away, I think more and more of our happy meeting; but for love and comfort, I think I shall have broken down." Goldie, do you hear that? [*She kisses the letter*] Now we both see how things are going for the best. But for my being

on, I should have died before broken-down drunkard, if not and you might still have been hard bread as a street singer, tried from a hospital ward to a grave." Yes, yes, *[Shudders]* that's true. "This place has man of me, and you have found and the means of earning a good. I count the days till we Good-bye, and heaven bless prays your ever affectionate Brierly." *[Kisses the letter freely]* And don't I count the days There! *[Makes a mark in her almanack]* Another gone! They so slow — when one looks forward yet they pass so quickly! *[Takes birdcage]* Come, Goldie, while you must sing me a nice song ing you hear that nice letter. *[Hanging up birdcage — a knock at the door]*

[Enter EMILY]

ly *[entering]*. May I come in? Oh, yes, Mrs. Jones.

[Sits to work]

ly. St. Evremond, please, Miss ds. Jones has changed his name. people have come down in circumstances, the best way they can do keep up their names. *[Sits]* I St. Evremond; it looks well in the d sounds foreign. That's always ive — and I dress my hair *à la ise*, to keep up the effect. I've t back the shawl you were kind to lend me.

. I hope you got the engage-dear?

ly *[sighs]*. No; the proprietor ny appearance was quite the — good stage face and figure, l that: you know how those es always flatter one; but they an opening just now in the duet and character-dance busi-

. I'm so sorry; your husband so disappointed.

ly. Oh! bless you, he doesn't what I've been after. I couldn't o worrit him, poor fellow! He's many troubles. I've been used gh it — before we came into rtune.

[Noise heard overhead — MAY starts]

. What noise is that? It's in oom.

EMILY. Don't be alarmed — it's only Green; I left him to practise the clog-dance while I went out. He's so clumsy. He often comes down like that in the double shuffles. But he gets on very nicely in the comic duets.

MAY. It's very fortunate he's so willing to turn his hand to anything.

EMILY. Yes, he's willing enough to turn his hand, only he is so slow in turning his legs. Ah, my dear, you're very lucky only having yourself to keep.

MAY. I find it hard enough to work sometimes. But after the life I've passed through, it seems paradise.

EMILY. Oh! I couldn't a-bear it; such a want of excitement! And you that was brought up to a public life too. *[Rises]* Every night about six, when they begin to light up the gas, I feel so fidgetty, you can't think — I want to be off to the theatre. I couldn't live away from the float, that is, not if I had to work for my living, — of course it was very different the three years we had our fortune.

[Sighs and gives herself an air of martyrdom]

MAY. I'm afraid Mr. Jones ran through a great deal in a very short time.

EMILY. Well, we were both fast, dear; and to do Jones justice, I don't think he was the fastest. You see he was used to spending, and I wasn't. It seemed so jolly at first to have everything one liked. *[A knock]*

MAY. Come in!

[Enter GREEN JONES, much dilapidated; he wears a decayed dressing-gown and a shocking cap, and carries a pair of clogs in his hand; he throws himself into chair]

MAY. Your wife's here, Mr. Jones.

EMILY. St. Evremond, please dear.

GREEN. Yes, Montague St. Evremond; that is to be in the paulo-poster-futurum. I thought you would be here, Milly. I saw you come in at the street door. *[MAY takes her work]*

EMILY. Oh, you were watching for me out of the window, I suppose, instead of practising your pas.

GREEN. I was allowing my shins an interval of refreshment. I hope, Miss Edwards, you may never be reduced to earn a subsistence by the clog hornpipe, or if you are, that you will be allowed to practise in your

stockings. The way I've barked my intractable shins!

EMILY. Poor dear fellow! There, there! He's a good boy, and he shall have a piece of sugar, he shall.

[*Kissing him*]
GREEN. Sugar is all very well, Emily, but I'm satisfied I shall never electrify the British public in this style of pump. [*Showing clog*] The truth is, Miss Edwards, I'm not meant for a star of the ballet; as Emily says, I'm too fleshy.

EMILY. Stout was the word.

GREEN. Oh! was it? Anyway, you meant short-winded. My vocation is in the more private walks of existence. If I'd a nice, easy, light porter's place, now —

EMILY. Oh! Montague, how can you be so mean-spirited?

GREEN. Or if there's nothing else open to us but the music halls: I always said we should do better with the performing dogs.

EMILY. Performing dogs! Hadn't you better come to monkeys at once?

GREEN. I've a turn for puppies. I'm at home with them. It's the thing I've been always used to, since I was at college. But we're interrupting Miss Edwards. Come along, Emily; if you're at liberty to give your Montague a lesson in the poetry of motion under difficulties. [*Showing the clog*] But, oh, remember your Montague has shins, and be as sparing as possible of the double shuffles.

[*Rises, leaving his clogs*]

EMILY. You poor, dear, soft-headed — soft-hearted — soft-shinned creature! What would you do without me? [*Comes back*] Oh, what a man it is; he has forgotten his dancing pumps, and I'm sure they're big enough.

[*Exeunt EMILY and GREEN JONES*]

MAY [*folding up her shawl*]. How times are changed since she made him give me half-a-crown that dreadful night, when Robert — [*Sits*] — I can't bear to think of it, though all has turned out so well.

[*Enter MRS. WILLOUGHBY*]

Ah, Mrs. Willoughby, I was expecting a visit from you. I've the week's rent all ready.

[*Gives her a folded parcel from small box on table*]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which ready

you always was, to the minit, th will say, my dear. You'll excuse if I take a chair, [*Sits*] these stairs trying to an elderly woman — not. I am so old as many that looks you which when I'd my front tittivated last week, Mr. Miggles, that's the dresser at 22, he says to me, Willoughby," he says, "forty is I'd give you with that front," he "No, Mr. Miggles," I says, "for was once, but will never be again, v trouble is a sharp thorn, and loss more than time, and a shortnes breath along of a shock three was last July." "No, Mr. Miggles says, "fronts can't undo the wor years," I says, "nor yet wigs, Miggles — which skin-partings to years, I never did see, and t the truth." [*Pauses for b*]

MAY. At all events, Mrs. loughby, you're looking very, well this morning.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Ah, my you are very good to say so, w if it wasn't for rheumatics and rates, one a-top of another, and dustmen, which their carts is a moe unless you stand beer, and that Sam, though which is the worst, sure is hard to say, only a gr mother's feelings is not to be which opodeldoc can't be rubbed the 'eart, as I said to Mrs. Mollo her that has my first floor fro which she says to me, "Mrs. loughby," says she, "nine oils is thing," she says, "rubbed in wa says she. "Which it's all very Mrs. Molloy," says I, "but how lone woman to rub it in the na the neck and the small of the b and Sam that giddy, and distre me to that degree. No, Mrs. Mol I says, "what's sent us we must it, and parties that's reduced to lodgings, can't afford easy cha which well I know it, and the tru is — and me with two beautie chintz in the front parlor, which l a bargain at the brokers when parties was sold up at 24, and no time to sit down in 'em than if I a cherrybin.

MAY. I'm sure you ought to one, so hard as you've worked all life, and when Sam gets a situation

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Sam, ah, boy — I came here about him; he he been here this morning?

z. No, not yet. I was expecting he promised to carry some home for me.

s. WILLOUGHBY. Ah Miss ds if you would only talk to he don't mind anything I say, re than if it was a flat-iron, which hat boy have cost me in distress nd and clothes, and caps, and ges never can be known — and or mother, which was the only brought up and had five, she says "Mother," she says, "he's a ild," she says, "and he's a beau- hild, but he have a temper of n"; which, "Mary," I says — as called Mary, like you, my after her aunt from which we xpectations but which was left e Blind Asylum, and the Fish- rs' Alms Houses, and very like e was, only she had light hair ue eyes — "Mary, my dear," I 'I hope you'll never live to see d took she was at twenty-three, a, and that boy I've had to mend ash and do for ever since, and nes it is.

y. I'm sure he loves you very and has an excellent heart.

WILLOUGHBY. Heart, my dear ch I wish it had been his heart d in his right-and pocket as I -mending his best trowsers last which it was a short pipe, which othing but the truth, and smoked t degree as if it had been black- , which many's the time when come in, I've said, "Sam," I've "I smell tobacco," I've said. dmother," he'd say to me, quite and innocent, "p'raps it's the ey" — and him a child of fifteen, a short pipe in his right-hand ! I'm sure I could have broke art over it, I could; let alone the - which I flung it into the fire a happy moment since is a I have not known.

[Pauses for breath]

r. Oh! he'll get rid of all his abits in time. I've broken him carry my parcels already.

s. WILLOUGHBY. Yes, indeed! ow you can trust him to carry s; but, oh! Miss Edwards, if I talk to him, and tell him short s the thief of time, and tobacco's ot of all evil, which Dean Close proved it strong enough, I'm -and I cut it out of the *Weekly*

Pulpit — and wherever that paper is now — [*Rummaging in her pocket — knock at door*] That's at your door — which, if you're expecting a caller or a customer — [*Rises*]

MAY. No; I expect no one — unless it's Sam. [*Knock repeated, timidly*] Come in. [*Lays down her work*]

[BRIERLY opens the door, timidly]

BRIERLY [*doubtfully*]. Miss Ed- wards, please?

MAY [*rushing into his arms*]. Robert! you here!

BRIERLY. My own dear May!

[*Rushes over to her*]

MAY [*confused*]. I'm so glad! But, how is it that you're — how well you look! [*Fluttered*]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Eh? well I'm sure!

MAY. Oh! you mustn't mind, Mrs. Willoughby, it's Robert.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Oh — Robert! I suppose, by the way he's a-goin' on, Robert's your brother — leastways, if he ain't your brother —

BRIERLY. Her brother? yes, ma'am, I'm her brother! [*Kisses MAY*]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Indeed! and if I might make bold to ask where you've come from —

BRIERLY. I'm just discharged.

[*He pauses — MAY giving him a look.*]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Discharged! and where from — not your situation, I 'ope?

BRIERLY. From Her Majesty's Service, if you must know.

MAY. I've not seen him for three years and more. I didn't expect him so soon, Mrs. Willoughby, so it was quite natural the sight of him should startle me.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which well I know it — not 'avin' had brothers myself, but an uncle that ran away for a soldier, and came back on the parish with a wooden leg, and a shillin' a day pension, and always in arrears for liquor — which the way that man would drink beer!

BRIERLY. I should have written to prepare you, but I thought I might be here as soon as my letter, so I jumped into the train at Dorchester, and here I am.

MAY. That was very thoughtless of you — no, it was very thoughtful and kind of you. But I don't understand —

BRIERLY. How I come to be here before the time I told you in my letter? You see, I had full marks and nothing against me, and the regulations —

[MAY gives him a look which interrupts him]

MAY [crosses to MRS. WILLOUGHBY]. If Sam comes shall I tell him to go down stairs to you, Mrs. Willoughby?

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. I shall be much obliged to you, my dear — which I know, when brothers and sisters meet they'll have a great deal to talk over, and two's company and three's none, is well beknown — and I never was one to stand listenin' when other folks is talkin' — and one thing I may say, as I told Mrs. Molloy only last week, when the first floor had a little tiff with the second pair front about the water — "Mrs. Molloy," I says, "nobody ever heard me put in my oar when I wasn't asked," I says, "and idle chatterin' and gossip," I says, "is a thing that I never was given to, and I ain't a-goin' to begin now," I says, which good mornin' to you, young man, and a better girl, and a nicer girl, and a harder workin' girl than your sister, I 'ope and trust may never darken my doors, [BRIERLY throws open door] which her rent was ever ready to the day. No, my dear, it's the truth, and you needn't blush. [During this last speech BRIERLY gets round and urges her towards door] Thank you, [Going to door] I can open the door for myself, young man. [Turns to him] And a very nice looking head you have on your shoulders, though you have had your hair cut uncommon short, which I must say — good mornin', my dear, and anything I can do for you. [Exit, but is heard still talking till the door below is shut loudly] I'm sure, which nobody can say but I was always ready to oblige, if reduced to let lodgings owing to a sudden shock.

BRIERLY. Phew! [Giving a sigh of relief] One would think she'd been on the silent system for a twelvemonth! Now, we're alone at last, May. Let me have a good look at you. I gave you a bit of a squeeze, but I hadn't a good look. [He takes her by the hand.]

MAY. Well —

BRIERLY. Prettier than ever — you couldn't look better or kinder.

MAY. Now sit down, and don't talk nonsense.

BRIERLY. Sit down! not I — had a good look at you — and I have a good look at the place. snug it is! as neat as the cell I've left. But it wasn't hard to keep in order — I had only a stool, a bed and a hammock. Didn't I polish hammock-hooks neither. One may have a pride in something — you! But here you've no end of things, sofa — and a carpet — and chairs and — [Going round as he speaks]

MAY. Isn't it a nice clock, Robert, and look at the cheffonier! I picked that up a bargain — and all out of my own earnings!

BRIERLY. It's the cosiest little for my bird — you were a singing once, you know. — [Sees the gun] And there's the old bread-winner! I'm glad you've not parted with that.

MAY. I should be the most useful creature if I did! How many dinners it's earned for me! — many a week's rent it's paid! for it I never should have known — my friend — my brother. Robert, I wanted to explain to Willoughby, when she called you brother.

BRIERLY. So did I. But I felt was true — [Sits] If I'm not brother born and bred, May, you've been a true sister to me — ever since that night —

MAY. Oh, Robert — a kind word was never lost yet. No wonder I came to you —

BRIERLY. Aye, when all stood against me in the prison — in the dock — to the van door. But for you, May, I should have been a desperate man. I might have become all they thought me, a felon, in the company of felons.

MAY. Oh, do not look back to misery — but tell me how you are so long before your time?

BRIERLY. Here's my ticket-of-leave — they've given me every week of nine months — they hadn't a word against me — I didn't want to go forward to my discharge — I was afraid to — I worked away; in the quarry-gang first, and in the office afterwards, as if I had to stay there for ever — I wasn't unhappy either — all were good to me. Then I had your letters to comfort me. But when I was sent for to the Governor's room yesterday, and told I was a free man, everything was

nd round — I staggered — they give me water, or I think I have fainted like a girl.

Ah, as I felt that night when e me the wine.

BRIERLY. Poor dear, I remember it was yesterday. But when I out at the gate, not for gang in my prison dress, with my mates, under the warder's eye, the sentry's musket, as I had many a weary week — but in a clothes — unwatched — a free free to go where I liked — to t I liked — speak to whom I *Rises*] I thought I should have crazy — I danced, I sang, I up the pebbles of the Chizzle — the boatmen laid hands on an escaped lunatic, till I told was a discharged prisoner, and they let me pass — but they ack from me; there was the s taint about me — you can't at off with the convict's jacket.

But here, no one knows you l get a fresh start now.

BRIERLY. I hope so, but it's awfully work, May; I've heard enough nder of all that stands between fellow who has been in trouble, honest life. But just let me ance.

Oh — if only Mr. Gibson ive you one.

BRIERLY. Who's he?

The husband of the lady who first and best friend. *[BRIERLY easy]* After you, of course, you thing. It was she gave me recommended me to her friends now I've quite a nice little s. I pay my way — I'm as as the day is long — and I'm g of taking an apprentice.

BRIERLY. How I wish I was a lass.

[Taking her hand]

I think I see those great hands spoiling my work.

BRIERLY. You don't want a light — eh, May?

No — I've not quite business for that yet. If Mr. Gibson nly give you employment. He's ng in the city.

BRIERLY. No chance of that, May. begin lower down, and when t a character, then I may reach higher, and so creep back little e to the level of honest men. *[y]* There's no help for it.

MAY *[putting her hands upon his shoulder]*. At all events you can wait and look about you a little — you've money coming in, you know.

BRIERLY. Me, May?

MAY. Yes. You forget those two sovereigns you lent me — I've put away a shilling every week out of my savings — and then there's the interest, you know — ever so much. It's all here. *[Goes to table, and coming down on his left, puts a savings-box into his hand]* You needn't count it. There'd have been more if you hadn't come so soon.

BRIERLY. My good, kind May, do you think I'd touch a farthing of your savings?

MAY. Oh, do take it, Robert, or I shall be so unhappy — I've had more pleasure out of that money than any I ever earned, because I thought it would go to help you.

BRIERLY. Bless your kind heart! To think of those little fingers working for me — a lusty, big-boned chap like me! Why, May, lass — I've a matter of twenty pounds in brass of my own earnings at Pentonville and Portland — overtime and allowances. The Governor paid it over to me, like a man, before I started yesterday — aye, and shook hands with me. God bless him for that!

MAY. Twenty pounds! Oh, how small my poor little earnings will look! I was so proud of them, too —

[Ruefully]

BRIERLY. Well, keep 'em, May — keep 'em to buy your wedding-gown.

[Takes her in his arms and kisses her.]

[Enter SAM — he gives a significant cough]

MAY. Oh! *[Startled]* Sam!

BRIERLY *[hastily]*. Sam! is it! Confound him! I'll teach him.

[Crosses, sees it is a boy and pauses]

SAM. Now will you, though? Granny will be uncommon obliged to you. She says I want teaching — don't she? *[To MAY]*

MAY. How dare you come in like that, Sam, without so much as knocking?

SAM. How was I to know you had company? Of course I'd knocked if I'd been aware you'd your young man.

BRIERLY. I tell you what, young un, if you don't make yourself scarce —

SAM. Well, what? *[Retreating]* If

I don't make myself scarce, you'll pitch into me. Just you try it, [*Squaring*] Lanky!—Yah! Hit one of your own size—do. [*Squaring*]

BRIERLY. Go it, Master Sam! Ha, ha, ha!

SAM. My name's not Sam. It's Samivel Willoughby, Esquire, most respectable references given and required, [*Pulls collar up*] as Granny says when she advertises the first floor.

BRIERLY. Now be off, like a good little chap.

SAM. Come, cheeky! Don't you use bad language. I'm rising fifteen, stand five feet five in my bluchers, and I'm sprouting agin' the summer, if I ain't six foot of greens like *you*.

MAY. Hold your tongue! you're a naughty, impudent little boy.

SAM. Come—I'm bigger than you are, I'll bet a bob. [*Stands on his toes*]

[*Enter MRS. WILLOUGHBY*]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Oh, here's that boy at last! which upstairs and downstairs, and all along the street, have I been a seekin' of him, [*Throws him over to left*] which, if you'd believe me, Miss Edwards, I left a fourpenny-bit in the chany dog-kennel on the mantelpiece downstairs, only yesterday mornin' as ever was, which if ever there was a real bit of Dresden, and cost me fourteen-and-six at Hanway Yard in 'appier days, with a black and white spaniel in a wreath of roses, and a Shepherdess to match, and the trouble I've 'ad to keep that boy's 'ands off it since he was in long clothes—where's that fourpenny-piece—[*Seizes him*] you young villain—which you know you took it.

SAM. Well, then, I did—to buy bird's-eye with.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Bird's-eye! and him not fifteen—and the only one left of three. [*Falls in chair*]

SAM. If you will nobble a fellow's bacca, you must take the consequences; and just you mind—it ain't no use a-tryin' it on breaking my pipes, Granny. I've given up Broselys and started a briar-root. [*Pulls it out*] It's a stunner.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Oh, dear, oh, dear! if it ain't enough to melt an 'eart of stone—no! fronts I may wear to 'ide my suffering, but my grey 'airs that boy have determined to bring with sorrow to the grave.

SAM. What? Cos I smoke? Why

there's Jem Miggles smokes, and year younger than me, and *he's* all all the lux'ries of the season father's going to take him to se badger drawn at Jemmy Shaw' of these days—and *his* mother go into hysterics.

MAY. Sam, I'm surprised you s take pleasure in making your mother unhappy!

SAM. I don't take pleasure—won't let me; she's always a kn and aggravatin' me. Here, dry eyes, granny—[*Goes to her*]—an be a good boy, and I won't go the rats, and I won't aggravat Miggles's bullfinches.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. And you'll up that nasty tobacco, and you'll your clothes tidy, and not get sl down ladders in your Sunday tro—which moleskins won't stand alone mixed woolens.

SAM. Best put me in charity les at once, with a muffin cap and b wouldn't I look stunnin'? Oh, m

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. There! just him—always some of his imp audacious chaff—I know he g from that young Miggles—read stop his poor granny's mouth with

SAM. No. [*Kisses her*] That's only way to stop it. Come, I'm to take myself up short, like a j cab 'oss! and be a real swell, gr in white kids! only I'm a-waitin I come into my fortune—you l that twenty pounds you was robb three years ago.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which ro is too good a word for it. It forgery, aye, and a'most as go murder—which it might ha' my death! Yes, my dears, as looking, civil-spoken a young m you would wish to see—in a : 'at, which I never can forget, a broad way of speaking—and, 'V you change me a twenty pound ma'am," he says; "And it ain't often," I says, "you could have into this shop"—which I was i cigar and periodical line at the ti

BRIERLY. Where was your shop?

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. In the Fu Road, three doors outside the Bel Gardens—"And a note is all the to me," I sez—"if all correct,"—and when I looked in that y man's face, I had no more susp than I should of either of yours

so he gave me the note, and k the sovereigns. And the next I saw was a gent, which his name d me was Hawkshaw, and he n the police, on'y in plain clothes, asked to look at the note, and e it was a bad 'un; and if that eft me on the sofa, in the back or behind the counter, with my a jar of brown rappee, and my among the ginger-beer bottles, re than I can tell—for fits it or days and days, and when I l out of 'em, then I was short rent, and the stock sold up, and ned.

[BRIERLY *shews signs of agitation while she is speaking*]

ERLY. And you never recovered money?

S. WILLOUGHBY. Not a penny, ar, and if it hadn't been for a friend that set me up in my own re, in the Fulham Workhouse, ht have been at this moment, ays St. George's, which that's al settlement—and that blessed

[*She cries*]

[*gaily*]. In a suit of grey a-stepping out with another big 'un and a little 'un together, job lot at an auction, to church unday, to such a jolly long ser-shouldn't I like it! [*Consolingly, angling his tone*] I say, don't cry, e, we ain't come to skilly yet.

S. WILLOUGHBY. Which if that man knew the mischief he'd done.

r. Perhaps he does, and is sorry [*They rise—he goes to back*]

S. WILLOUGHBY. Not he, the ! What do the likes o' them or the poor creatures they robs gin's too good for 'em, the s.

ERLY [*taking his hat, and going*]. bye, May.

r. You're not going?

ERLY. I've a little bit of busi- at can't wait—some money to

r. You'll not be long?

ERLY. No; I'll be back directly.

Thank heaven, I can make it her! [*Exit BRIERLY*]

t. [*Aside*] Poor fellow! he can't ! she little thinks—

S. WILLOUGHBY. You'll excuse s. Not often I talk about it, Miss ds, which it's no use a-cryin' spilt milk, and there's them as

tempers the wind to the shorn lamb—and if it wasn't for that boy—

SAM. There, she's at me again.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which if I'd only the means to put him to school, and out of the streets, and clear of that Jim Miggles and them rats—

SAM [*half crying*]. Bother the rats!

MAY. You see, Sam, how unhappy you make your grandmother.

SAM. And don't you see how unhappy she makes me, talkin' of sendin' me to school.

MAY [*forcing him to* MRS. WILLOUGHBY]. Come, kiss her, and promise to be a good boy. Ah, Sam, you don't understand the blessing of having one who loves you as she does.

SAM. Then, what does she break my pipes for?

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Oh, them pipes! [*A knock*]

MAY. More visitors! What a busy morning this is! Come in!

[*Enter MR. GIBSON*]

MR. GIBSON. Miss Edwards—eh?

MAY. Yes, sir.

MR. GIBSON. Glad I'm right—I thought it was the third floor front—a woman told me downstairs. I'm afraid I pulled the wrong bell.

[*Looks about him, takes off his hat, gloves, etc.—MAY sets him a chair; he sits*]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. And a nice way Mrs. Molloy would be in if you brought her down to another party's bell, which, asking your pardon, sir, but was it the first floor as opened the street door?

MR. GIBSON. I don't know. It was a lady in a very broad cap border and still broader brogue.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which that is the party, sir, as I was a-speakin' of; and I do 'ope she didn't fly out, sir, which Mrs. Molloy of a morning—after her tea—she says it's the tea—is that rampageous—

MR. GIBSON. No, no; she was civil enough when I said I wanted Miss Edwards.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which I do believe, my dear, you've bewitched every soul in the 'ouse, from the kitchens to the attics.

MR. GIBSON. Miss Edwards don't confine her witchcraft to your lodgers, my good lady. She's bewitched my wife. My name's Gibson.

MAY. Oh, sir; I've never been able to say what I felt to your good, kind lady; but I hope you will tell her I am grateful.

MR. GIBSON. She knows it by the return you have made. You've showed you deserved her kindness. For fifty people ready to help, there's not one worth helping — that's my conclusion. I was telling my wife so this morning, and she insisted that I should come and satisfy myself that she had helped one person at any rate who was able and willing to help herself, [*Looks at her*] and a very tidy, nice looking girl you are, [*Goes up round table and comes down*] and a very neat, comfortable room you have, I must say.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which you can tell your good lady, sir, from me, Miss Edwards' rent were always ready to the days and minits — as I was telling her brother just now.

MR. GIBSON. Brother? My wife said you were alone in the world.

MAY. I was alone, sir, when she found me. He was [*She hesitates*] away.

MR. GIBSON [*pointing to SAM, who has put down a chair and is balancing himself acrobatically*]. Is this the young gentleman?

[*SAM pitches over with chair, and*

MRS. WILLOUGHBY *lugs him up*]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Oh, dear no, sir, begging your pardon, which that is my grandson, Samuel Willoughby, the only one of three, and will be fifteen the twenty-first of next April at eight o'clock in the morning, and a growing boy — which take your cap out of your mouth, Samuel, and stand straight, and let the gentleman see you.

[*MR. GIBSON sits*]

SAM [*sulkily*]. The old gent can see well enough — it don't want a telescope. [*Sinks across at back*] I ain't a-going to be inspected. I'll mizzle. [*Takes flying leap over chair*]

[*Exit SAM*]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which Miss Edwards' brother is grown up, and only come back this blessed mornin' as ever was, discharged from Her Majesty's Service, and five foot nine in his shoes, by the name of Robert — which, well he may, for a sweeter complexion —

MR. GIBSON. With a good character, I hope.

MAY. Oh, yes! [*Eagerly*] the very best, sir.

[*Re-enter BRIERLY*]

BRIERLY. [*Aside*] I've done it! I can face her now.

MR. GIBSON. So — [*Rises*] I suppose this is Robert, a likely young fellow.

MAY. This is Mr. Gibson, Robert, the husband of the lady who was good to me.

BRIERLY. Heaven bless her and you too, sir, for your kindness to that poor girl, while I was unable to help her.

MR. GIBSON. But now you've got your discharge, she'll have a protector.

BRIERLY. I hope so, sir — as long as I live, and can earn a crust — I suppose I shall be able to do that.

MR. GIBSON. What do you mean by that?

BRIERLY. Ah, there it is; I wish I knew what I could get to do, but there are not many things in the way of work that would frighten me to think.

MR. GIBSON. That's the spirit, like — your sister speaks well of you, but I shouldn't mind that. It's enough for me that you've come out of [*BRIERLY looks startled*] Her Majesty's Service with a good character. [*BRIERLY gives a sigh of relief*] You write a good hand?

[*MAY goes up and round table and gets letters from box — comes down*]

BRIERLY. Tolerably good, sir.

MAY. Beautiful, sir: here are some of his letters — look, sir. [*Going to shew him, but pauses, seeing date of letter*] Portland! — not this, [*Turns page*] This side is better written.

MR. GIBSON. A capital hand. Do you keep accounts?

BRIERLY. Yes, sir, I helped to keep the books — yonder.

[*Re-enter SAM, who comes over rapidly at back, to MRS. WILLOUGHBY*]

SAM. Holloa, granny, here's a parcel I found for you in the letter-box — ain't it heavy, neither.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. For what? [*Takes it*] Whatever is it? Money? Oh! Sam, you ha'n't been and gone and done anything wrong?

SAM. Bother! Do you think I had I'd a come to you with the swag?

[*MRS. WILLOUGHBY, who has opened the packet, screams, and lets a paper fall from the packet*]

What's the matter, Mrs. Willoughby?

WILLOUGHBY. Sovereigns! real sovereigns!

GIBSON. } Sovereigns!

Oh, crikey!

[Goes up and down in exultation] [picks up the paper Mrs. Willoughby has let fall]. Here's a note from Mrs. Willoughby — £20 in aid of an old debt."

GIBSON [who has seated himself begun to write, rises and comes forward]. Yes, and no signature. Come, my dear, old lady! Here, give her a drink of water. [To MAY]

WILLOUGHBY [recovering]. Sovereigns! for me? Oh, sir, let me show 'em — the beauties — eight, ten, twelve, fifteen, eighteen, twenty. Just the money I lost.

There, granny — I always said I should come into our fortune.

WILLOUGHBY [with a sudden change]. I shouldn't wonder if it was some nasty ring-dropper. Oh! my Bank of Elegance, or only a show? Which I've seen 'em at the Bridge a-sellin' sovereigns at a penny a piece.

GIBSON. Oh, no! they're the real thing.

BRIERLY. Perhaps it's somebody who's wronged you of the money and you to clear his conscience.

GIBSON. Ah! eccentric people do that sort of thing — even with their own cash. Take my advice, old lady, keep the cash.

WILLOUGHBY. Which in course of time any man like you knows best, and I'll give whoever sent the money, all the good it does him, and I'll say he never know the want of it. Amen!

WILLOUGHBY. Which, first and foremost — there's my silver teapot, and I'll pawn this blessed day, and I'll ask Mrs. Molloy to a cup of my best blue chaney, and then any pressed boy shall have a year of school.

I wish the party had kept his word! [Mrs. Willoughby is looking at the sovereigns over and over]. Oh, granny, you couldn't spare a chap a couple of them, could you?

WILLOUGHBY. Drat the boy's name! Him askin' for sovereigns

as natural — Ah! they'll all be for you, Sam, one of these days.

SAM. I should like a little in advance.

[SAM makes a grab at the sovereigns playfully, and runs, followed by Mrs. Willoughby, whom he dodges behind a chair — Mr. Gibson writes at table].

MRS. WILLOUGHBY [half-hysterically, throwing herself into a chair]. Oh! Sam, which that boy will be the death of his poor grandmother, he will.

SAM [jumping over chair-back, on which he perches, gives back money and kisses her]. There, granny, it was only a lark.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY [admiringly and affectionately]. Oh, what a boy you are!

[Exeunt Mrs. Willoughby and Sam]

MR. GIBSON [gives note to BRIERLY]. Here, young man, bring this note to my office, 25 St. Nicholas-lane, at ten o'clock to-morrow. I've discharged my messenger — we'll see if you are fit for the place.

BRIERLY. Oh, sir!

MR. GIBSON. There — there — don't thank me. [Crosses to MAY] I like gratitude that shews itself in acts like yours to my wife. Let's hope your brother will repay me in the same coin.

[Exit]

MAY. Robert, the money has brought us a blessing already.

[He takes her in his arms exultingly — music, piano]

END OF SECOND ACT

ACT III

SCENE. — MR. GIBSON'S Bill-broking Office in Nicholas-lane, City — a mahogany railing runs up the stage, separating compartment (in which stand across the stage two large mahogany desks, set round with wire and a brass rail at the top to support books) from the compartment at the side of which is the door leading to MR. GIBSON'S private office — in front of the compartment runs a mahogany counter, with a place for writing at, divided off — a large iron safe for books — another safe near door — door communicating with passage

and street—a small desk down stage—two windows].

[As the curtain rises, SAM is discovered carrying the ledgers out of safe, through an entrance in the railing to compartment, and arranging them on the desks—BRIERLY is discovered at the counter numbering cheques in a cheque-book]

SAM. There they are, all ship-shape. I say, Bob, if granny could see these big chaps, [Whilst carrying ledgers] all full of £ s d, and me as much at home with them as old Miggles with his toy terriers. [Puts books on desk and returns]

BRIERLY. Only the outsides, Sam—fifty—fifty-one—

SAM. Everything must have a beginning. I'm only under messenger now, at six bob a week—but it's the small end of the wedge. I don't mean to stay running errands and dusting books long, I can tell you. I intend to speculate—I'm in two tips already.

BRIERLY. Tips?

SAM. Yes. [Takes out betting book] I stand to win a fiver on Pollux for the Derby, and a good thing on the Count for the Ascot Cup—they were at Pollux last week, but he's all right again, and the Count's in splendid form, and the stable uncommon sweet on him.

BRIERLY. Bring me those pens. [As SAM comes to him with the pens he catches him by the collar and shakes him] You young rascal!—Now, you mark me, Master Sam. If ever I hear of you putting into a tip again, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life, and then I'll split on you to Mr. Gibson, and he'll discharge you.

SAM. Now I call that mean. One City gent interfering with another City gent's amusements.

BRIERLY [bitterly]. Amusements! When you've seen as much as I have, you'll know what comes of such amusements, lad.

SAM. As if I didn't know well enough already. Lark, lush, and a latch-key—a swell rig out, and lots of ready in the pockets—a drag at Epsom, and a champagne lunch on the hill! Oh, my—ain't it stunning!

BRIERLY. Ah! Sam, that's the fancy picture—mine is the true one. Excitement first, then idleness and drink, and then bad companions—sin—shame—and a prison.

SAM. Come, I don't want to preached to in office hours—Gives me quite enough of that at—ain't it a bore, just!

BRIERLY. Oh, my lad, take advice, do! Be steady—stick to and home. It's an awful look-out a young chap adrift in this place—out them sheet-anchors.

[Returns to counter]

SAM. Oh, I ain't afraid. I cut eye-teeth early. Tips ain't worse time bargains—and they're bus [Crosses at back] But don't look Bob, you're the right sort, you and sooner than rile you I'll cut burn "Bell's Life," and take to Court and the "Share List," and respectable, you know.

[Sits on counter]

BRIERLY [looking over cheque]. You young rascal! you've made misnumber my cheques.

SAM. Serves you jolly well for coming to business on your wedding day.

BRIERLY. Oh! I've two hours before I'm wanted for that.

SAM. I say, Bob, you don't to say you've been to the Bank for petty cash this morning?

BRIERLY. Yes.

SAM. And didn't leave the note at the counter?

BRIERLY. No.

SAM. And didn't have your pocket picked?

BRIERLY. No.

SAM. Well, you are a cool one. I've often wondered how the poor fellow in Newgate managed to eat a breakfast before they're turned out. But a fellow coming to office the morning he's going to be spliced—when the Governor has given him a holiday, too—by Jove, it beats Old Bailey by lengths. I hope I'll be as cool when I'm married.

BRIERLY. You—you young sparrow!

SAM. Yes. I've ordered the young woman I want down at Birmingham. Miss Edwards ain't my style.

BRIERLY. No—isn't she the one? I'm sorry it's too late to have altered.

SAM. She's too quiet—want a high action. Now I call Jones a splendid woman. Sam, I like you, loughby, Esquire, must have a tip-top lady. I don't mean to

can go to church with my own am.

BRIERLY. I suppose that means you've set up as a crossing r. And now, Sam, till your am comes round for you, just f to the stationer's and see if bison's new bill-case is ready.

[vaulting over the counter, sees through the glass door]. All right. Miss Edwards a-coming in full twig—I ain't wanted. Quite—Samivel is fly.

[Puts his finger to his nose and Exit]

[Enter MAY in wedding dress]

BRIERLY. Ah, May, darling! Takes her by the hand and kisses her

[looking in]. I saw you!

[Exit] BRIERLY. Hang that boy! But mind his impudence, my own life.

Not yet, sir.

BRIERLY. In two hours.

There's many a slip between o and the lip, you know. But clerks aren't come yet, I thought just look in and shew you—

[Displays her dress] BRIERLY. Your wedding gown!

Yes. It's Mrs. Gibson's pres- th such a kind note—and she on providing the wedding break- and she's sent in the most ul cake, and flowers from their onservatory. My little room o pretty.

BRIERLY. It always looks pretty hou art in it. I shall never e sun, even in Nicholas Lane, e are married, darling.

Oh! Robert, won't it be ul? Me, housekeeper here, and essage, and such a favourite And to think we owe all to these kind, generous—There's only ng I can't get off my mind.

BRIERLY. What's that?

Mr. Gibson doesn't know the about you. We should have m before this.

BRIERLY. It's hard for a poor chap ought clear of the mud, to let rope he's holding to and slide gain. I'll tell him when I've ng enough here to try me, only bit.

Perhaps you are right, dear.

Sometimes the thought comes like a cloud across me. But you've never said how you like my dress.

[Displaying it] BRIERLY. I couldn't see it for look- ing at thy bonny face—but it's a grand gown.

MAY. And my own making! I for- got—Mrs. Jones is come, and Mrs. Willoughby. They're going to church with us, you know—Emily looks so nice—she would so like to see the office, she says, if I might bring her in?

BRIERLY. Oh, yes! the place is free to the petticoats till business hours.

MAY [crosses and calls at door]. Come in, Emily.

[Enter MRS. GREEN JONES]

EMILY. Oh! Mr. Briery.

MAY. While Robert does the hon- ours of the office, I'll go and help Mrs. Willoughby to set out the break- fast. The white service looks so lovely, Robert, and my canary sings as I haven't heard him since I left the old lodgings. He knows there's joy in the wind.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY [calling without]. Miss Edwards!

MAY. There! I'm wanted. I'm coming, Mrs. Willoughby. Oh, dear! If I'd known the trouble it was to be married, I don't think I should have ventured. I'm coming. [Exit]

EMILY [who has been looking about her]. I did so want to see an office—a real one, you know. I've seen 'em set on the stage often, but they ain't a bit like the real thing.

BRIERLY. They are but dull places. Not this one, though, since May's been housekeeper.

EMILY. Yes, they are dull, but so respectable—look so like money, you know. I suppose, now, there's no end of money passes here?

BRIERLY. A hundred thousand pounds a day, sometimes.

EMILY. Gracious goodness! All in sovereigns?

BRIERLY. Not a farthing—all in cheques and bills. We've a few thou- sands, that a queer, old-fashioned depositor insists on Mr. Gibson keeping here, but, except that, and the petty cash, there's no hard money in the place.

EMILY. Dear me! I thought you City people sat on stools all day shovel- ing sovereigns about. Not that I

could bear to think of Jones sitting on a stool all day, even to shovel about sovereigns, though he always says something in the City would suit him better than the comic duet business. But he doesn't know what's good for him — never did, poor fellow.

BRIERLY. Except when he married you.

EMILY. Well, I don't know about that, but I suppose he would have got through the property without me — he's so much the gentleman, you know.

BRIERLY. He's coming to church with us?

EMILY. Oh, yes! You know he's to give away the bride. But he was obliged to keep an appointment in the City first; so queer for Jones, wasn't it? He wouldn't tell me what it was.

GREEN *[heard without]*. Two and six, my man. Very good, wait.

BRIERLY. Here's your husband!

EMILY *[looking through door]*. In a cab — and a new coat, and waistcoat, and trousers! Oh, Jones! Well, I sha'n't pay for them.

[Enter GREEN JONES in a gorgeous new suit]

GREEN *[speaking off]*. Now, hand me out those parcels — yah, stupid, give me hold. *[Hands in parcels one by one]* Here, bear a hand.

[He pitches parcels to BRIERLY, who pitches them on to MRS.]

GREEN JONES, who deposits them on the counter]

EMILY. *[As first bonnet box comes in]* Jones! *[As second bonnet box comes in]* Green! *[As case of Eau-de-Cologne comes in]* Green Jones! *[Glove box comes in]* Oh! *[Two bouquets in paper are given in]* Gracious goodness!

GREEN. There — all out. Let's see — bonnets, Eau-de-Cologne, gloves, bouquets — seven ten; two and six the cab — my own togs, five ten — that's thirteen two and six in all.

EMILY. Jones, are you mad?

GREEN. Is your principal here, Briarly?

BRIERLY. The Governor? No, it's not his time yet.

GREEN. *[En attendant]* You couldn't advance me thirteen two six, could you?

BRIERLY. What! lend you the money? I'm afraid —

EMILY *[reproachfully]*. Oh, Jones!

GREEN. Emily, be calm. I the least consequence. They call — the shopman, I mean — that the two shopmen and cabby.

EMILY. Oh, he's gone crazy!

GREEN. The fact is, I've windfall. Choker Black has turned trumps. He was put in the California's year, had to bolt Australia — struck an awfully full at the diggings, and is paying old ticks like an emperor. He in for two thousand, and he has me bills for five hundred, as instalment.

EMILY. Five hundred! And got the money?

GREEN. I've got the bills agent. Here they are. Emily brace your husband! *[He kisses her]*

BRIERLY. I wish you joy — you. Mr. Gibson will discount bills for you as soon as he comes.

GREEN. But, I say, cash, you no curious sherry — no old mas patent filters — I've had rather much of that sort of thing in my

EMILY *[who has been peeping in bonnet box]*. What a duck of a

BRIERLY. No, you're not your old sixty per cent. friend. We only do good bills at the rate.

EMILY *[who has opened gloves]*. And what loves of gloves!

GREEN. That's your sort. now the full value of the commercial principle.

EMILY. Oh, Green! But you careful of the money?

GREEN. Careful! I'm an man. Henceforth I swear allow me to register a vow in office? — to devote myself to virtuous pursuit of money — I'm worth five hundred pound fifteen hundred more coming. Not one farthing of that money go in foolish extravagance.

EMILY. But how about these Jones?

GREEN. Trifles; — a cadeau for the ladies, and a case of Eau-de-Cologne for myself. I've been rather to seed so long, and want water much.

[Sprinkles himself with Eau-de-Cologne]

EMILY. Oh dear, Green! I'm you're as great a fool as ever.

BRIERLY. Nay, nay, Mrs. Jo

an's a fool with £500 in his pocket. Here come the clerks; — band-boxes, bouquets ain't businesslike. You carry these down to May.

GREEN *[loading EMILY with the parcels]*. Beg her acceptance of a hat, a bouquet, and a box of Piver's and a quarter; — and accept the yourself, from yours ever affectionately, G. J.

[Tries to kiss her over the parcels but cannot]

EMILY *[from over the parcels]*. Oh, long with your nonsense! I'll give you one down stairs. *[Exit]*

MR. BURTON and MR. SHARPE, clerks]

SHARPE. Good morning. Governor yet?

BRIERLY. Not yet, Mr. Sharpe; getting near his time, though.

[CLERKS hang up their hats, coats, etc., and seat themselves at desks]

SHARPE. *[To MR. GREEN JONES]* We do anything for you, sir?

BRIERLY *[indicating GREEN JONES]*. A gentleman's waiting to see Mr. n. Here he is.

[Enter MR. GIBSON]

MR. GIBSON *[rubbing his feet on the mat]*. Good morning, morning, Mr. n. — good morning, Burton.

Robert — didn't expect to find you at the office this morning.

BRIERLY. Here's a gentleman waiting for you, sir, on business.

MR. GIBSON. If you'll walk into my room?

[Exit GREEN JONES into MR. GIBSON'S room]

BRIERLY. I thought I might as well get the cheques, sir, and go for the petty cash. Somehow, I felt I didn't like anything to go wrong today.

MR. GIBSON. Well, that's a very queer feeling. I hope May likes my present. She is a first-rate housekeeper; though she *did* call you a rother, the little rogue — and I've no reason to be satisfied with you.

BRIERLY. I'm right proud of that,

MR. GIBSON. You won't mind my giving you a word of advice on your wedding-day? Go on as you've begun with a bright eye and an enquiring ear in your head — learn how busi-

ness is done — watch the market — and from what I've seen of you the six months you've been here, I shouldn't wonder if I found a better berth than messenger for you one of these days.

BRIERLY. Mr. Gibson — sir — I can't thank you — but a look-out like that — it takes a man's breath away.

MR. GIBSON. In the City there's no gap between the first round of the ladder and the top of the tree. But that gentleman's waiting. *[Pauses — goes to door]* By-the-way! I expect a call from a Mr. Hawkshaw.

BRIERLY *[starting]*. Hawkshaw!

MR. GIBSON. Yes, the famous detective. Shew him in when he comes. I've a particular appointment with him.

[Exit MR. GIBSON into his own room]

BRIERLY. Hawkshaw coming here! The principal witness against me at my trial. Perhaps he won't know me — I'm much changed. But they say, at Portland, he never forgets a face. If he knows me, and tells Mr. Gibson, he'll discharge me — and, to-day, just when we looked to be so happy! It would break May's heart. But why should I stay? I'm free for the day — I will not wait to meet my ruin.

[Going]

[Enter HAWKSHAW]

HAWKSHAW. Mr. Gibson within?

BRIERLY. Yes, sir, but he has a gentleman with him.

HAWKSHAW. Take in my name.

[Writes on a card with pencil and gives it to BRIERLY]

BRIERLY *[takes card and, crossing, sees name on it — Aside]*. Hawkshaw! It is too late! Would you like to look at the paper, sir?

[Offers him one from desk]

HAWKSHAW *[as he takes it, gives a keen look of recognition at BRIERLY, who shrinks under his eye, but represses his agitation by an effort]*. I've seen you before, I think?

BRIERLY. I don't recollect you, sir.

HAWKSHAW *[carelessly]*. Perhaps I'm wrong — though I've a good memory for faces. Take in my card. *[BRIERLY goes off with card]* It's Dalton's pal — the youngster who got four years for passing forged Bank of England paper, at the Bellevue Tea Gardens. I owe Master Dalton one for that night yet. Back from Portland, eh? Looks all the better for his

schooling. But Portland's an odd shop to take an office messenger from. I wonder if his employer got his character from his last place.

[Re-enter BRIERLY]

BRIERLY. Mr. Gibson will see you in a moment, sir.

HAWKSHAW. Very well.

[Gives him a look]

[Re-enter GREEN JONES from Mr. GIBSON'S room, with check]

GREEN. [To BRIERLY] All right! Market rate—and no old masters. I'll drive to the bank—cash this—settle with those counter-skipppers, and rattle back in time to see you turned off. I say—you must allow me to order a little dinner at the "Star and Garter", and drive you down—all right, you know. Mail phaeton and pair—your wife and my wife. I want to show you the style G. J. used to do it in. [Goes up] Now, cabby, pull round—[Speaking loudly]—London Joint Stock Bank—best pace.

[Exit GREEN JONES]

BRIERLY. [Aside] He little thinks what may be hanging over me.

MR. GIBSON [appearing at the door of his room]. Now, Mr. Hawkshaw, I'm at your service.

HAWKSHAW [returning BRIERLY the paper]. Cool case of note-passing, that at Bow-street, yesterday. [BRIERLY winces—aside] It's my man, sure enough. [Exit into GIBSON'S room]

BRIERLY. He knows me—I can read it in his face—his voice. He'll tell Mr. Gibson! Perhaps he's telling him now!—I wish I'd spoken to him—but they have no mercy. Oh, if I'd only made a clean breast of it to Mr. Gibson before this!

[Enter GIBSON and HAWKSHAW from Mr. GIBSON'S room]

MR. GIBSON. [To first clerk] Mr. Sharpe, will you go round to the banks and see what's doing? [SHARPE takes his hat and exits] Mr. Burton, you'll be just in time for morning's clearance.

BURTON [Getting his hat—Aside]. By Jove! the Governor wants to make a morning's clearance of us, I think. I'm half an hour too soon for the Clearing House. Time for a tip-top game at billiards. [Exit]

MR. GIBSON. Robert!

[Writing at desk]

BRIERLY. Yes, sir.

MR. GIBSON. Before you lost just step round into Glynn's and get me cash for this. You'll have enough before you're wanted down stairs, you rascal.

BRIERLY. [Aside] He knows me. [Aloud] I'll be back in five minutes, sir.

[As GIBSON is about to give him the cheque, HAWKSHAW, who is standing between GIBSON and BRIERLY, interposes, and takes cheque carelessly]

HAWKSHAW. Your messenger, sir.

MR. GIBSON. Yes.

HAWKSHAW. Had him long?

MR. GIBSON. Six months.

HAWKSHAW. Good character?

MR. GIBSON. Never had a steadier, soberer, better-behaved lad in the office.

HAWKSHAW. Had you referred to him?

MR. GIBSON. Why, I think I have him mainly on the strength of his good looks and his sweetheart's. His honest face is the best testimonial I have.

HAWKSHAW. H'm—neither looks nor ways to be relied on.

MR. GIBSON. You detectives will suspect your own fathers. Why, you look at the lad. Come, you never had him through your hands.

[A paper]

HAWKSHAW. No, he's quite a stranger to me. [Turns away] He has the cheque, young man. Take care he doesn't make no mistake about it.

BRIERLY. [Aside, going] Saved! Heaven bless him for his words.

HAWKSHAW. [Aside] Poor fellow, he's paid his debt at Portland. [Aloud] Now to business. You say a cheque drawn by Vanzeller & Co., of Portland, on the London Joint Stock Bank, was presented for discount here, last night, which you know to be a forgery?

MR. GIBSON. Yes. As it was five hours the clerk told the present clerk to call this morning.

HAWKSHAW. Bill forging is tip-top work. The man who did this knows what he's about. We must alarm him. What time did the clerk tell him to call?

MR. GIBSON. At eleven.

HAWKSHAW. It's within five minutes. You go to your room. I'll find my place at one of these desks

and send the customers in to
When the forged bill is pre-
, you come to the door and say,
enough for me to hear—"Van-
and Co., Penang,"—and leave
st to me.

GIBSON [*nervously*]. Hadn't I
have assistance within call?

HAWKSHAW. Oh dear no—I like
work single-handed—but don't be
d. Take it coolly, or you may
in the bird. [*Goes to desk*]

GIBSON. Easy to say take it
! I haven't been thief catching
life.

[*Exit GIBSON into his room*]

[*Enter Moss*]

ss [*at the counter, getting out*
lls]. Let me see—Spelter and
e. Fifty, ten, three—thirty days
sight. That's commercial. [*Ex-*
ing another bill] For two hundred
o months—drawn by Captain
s—accepted the Honourable Au-
Greenway: that's a thirty per
. Better try that at another
[*Takes out another*]. Mossop
ills—good paper—ninety-nine,
two—at sixty days. That'll
re.

GIBSON. [*At door of his room*]
Hawkshaw!

HAWKSHAW. H—sh!

[*Warns him against using his*
name, but obeys his call, and
goes in]

ss [*on hearing name*]. Hawk-
[*With a quick glance as HAWK-*
passes into Mr. GIBSON's room]
detective here! Ware—hawk!
ed, but recovering] Well, it ain't
e—I'm all on the square, now.
s will go missing—it ain't me
steals 'em—Tiger does that—
ways a *bonâ fide* holder for value
an face any examination, I can.
should like to know Hawkshaw's
game, and I shouldn't mind
git. [*Re-enter HAWKSHAW*] Mr.
a, if you please?

HAWKSHAW. He's in his office, sir.
Moss passes in he recognises him.
t Moss] Melter Moss here!
e be the forger? He heard my

Dear, dear, to think that a
ss-man like Mr. Gibson should
en enough to call a man like me
s name. [*Re-enter Moss*] Here
nes; now for the signal.

[*Goes to desk*]

Moss [*coming down with cheques*
and bill book]. All right! Beautiful
paper, most of it. One, two of 'em
fishy. Well, I'll try *them* three doors
down—they ain't so particular.

HAWKSHAW. [*Aside*] No signal!

Moss. [*In front of counter*] If you'll
allow me, I'll take a dip of your ink,
young man—I've an entry to make in
my bill book.—[HAWKSHAW *itches*
him a pen] Thank you.

[*Moss writes*]

[*Enter DALTON, dressed as a re-*
spectable elderly commercial
man, in as complete contrast
as possible with his appear-
ance in First Act]

DALTON. Mr. Gibson?

[*Takes out his bill case*]

HAWKSHAW. [*At desk*] You'll find
him in his office, sir.

DALTON. [*Aside*] That's not the
young man I saw here yesterday
afternoon. [*Aloud*] Let me see first
that I've got the bill.

[*Rummages for bill*]

Moss [*recognising DALTON*]. Tiger
here, in his City get-up. Oh, oh!
If this should be Hawkshaw's little
game! I'll drop him a line.

[*Writes, and passes paper secretly*
to DALTON, with a significant
look, and taking care to keep
behind the railing of the counter]

DALTON [*recognising him*]. Moss!
[*Taking paper, reads*] "Hawkshaw's at
that desk." Forewarned, forearmed!

[*Goes up*]

Moss [*goes up*]. There, I hope I've
spoiled Hawkshaw's little game.

[*Exit Moss*]

[*Mr. GIBSON appears at door of office*]

MR. GIBSON. [*About to address*
HAWKSHAW again] Mr.—

HAWKSHAW [*hastily interrupting*
him]. H'sh! a party wants to see you,
sir, if you could step this way, for a
moment.

DALTON. Would you oblige me,
Mr. Gibson, by looking very particu-
larly at this bill?

[*Gives it to GIBSON, who comes*
down]

MR. GIBSON. "Vanzeller and Co.,
Penang." [*Glances at HAWKSHAW,*
aside, who crosses and seats himself at
desk] He don't stir! "Vanzeller and
Co., Penang." [*Aside*] Confound it,
I haven't made a blunder, have I!
"Vanzeller and Co., Penang."

[HAWKSHAW prepares handcuffs under the desk]

DALTON. Yes, a most respectable firm. But all's not gold that glitters; I thought the paper as safe as you do; but, unluckily, I burnt my fingers with it once before. You may or may not remember my presenting a bill drawn by the same firm for discount two months ago.

MR. GIBSON. Yes, particularly well.

DALTON. Well, sir, I have now discovered that was a forgery.

MR. GIBSON. So have I.

DALTON. And I'm sadly afraid, between you and me.—By the way, I hope I may speak safely before your clerk?

MR. GIBSON. Oh, quite.

DALTON. I'm almost satisfied that this bill is a forgery, too. The other has been impounded, I hear. My object in coming here yesterday was, first to verify, if possible, the forgery in the case of this second bill; and next, to ask your assistance, as you had given value for the first as well as myself, in bringing the forger to justice.

[HAWKSHAW looks up as in doubt]

MR. GIBSON. Really, sir,—

DALTON. Oh, my dear sir! If we City men don't stand by each other in these rascally cases! But before taking any other step, there is one thing I owe to myself, as well as to you, and that is to repay you the amount of the first forged bill.

MR. GIBSON. But you said you had given value for it?

DALTON. The more fool I! But if I am to pay twice, that is no reason you should be a loser. I've a memorandum of the amount here. [Looks at his bill-book] Two hundred and twenty—seven—five. Here are notes—two hundreds—a ten—and two fives—seven—and one—two—three. [Counting out copper]

MR. GIBSON. Oh! pray, sir, don't trouble yourself about the coppers.

DALTON. I'm particular in these matters. Excuse me—it's a little peculiarity of mine—[Counting out coppers]—three—four—five. There! that's off my conscience! But you've not examined the notes.

[HAWKSHAW pockets handcuffs]

MR. GIBSON. Oh, my dear sir.

[Putting them up]

DALTON. Ah! careless, careless!

[Shakes his head] Luckily, I had dors'd 'em.

MR. GIBSON. Really, sir, I marked that two hundred and two off to a bad debt a month ago; the way, I have not the pleasure of knowing your name.

DALTON. Wake, sir—Theodore Wake, of the firm of Wake Brothers, shippers and wharfingers, Limehouse and Dock-street, Liverpool. We have a branch establishment at Liverpool. Here's our card. [Gives card]

MR. GIBSON. So far from expecting you to repay the money, I thought you were coming to bleed me with forged bill No. 2—for a fortnight it is, most certainly.

DALTON. Quite natural, my friend, sir, quite natural—I've no right to feel the least hurt.

MR. GIBSON. And what's more, you had a detective at that desk ready to pounce upon you.

DALTON. No, really!

MR. GIBSON. You can drop the clerk, now, Mr. Hawkshaw.

[HAWKSHAW comes forward]

DALTON. Hawkshaw! Have the honour to address Mr. Hawkshaw, detective, the hero of the great London dust robberies, and the famous Transatlantic line-transfer forgeries? [Crashes]

HAWKSHAW. I'm the man, sir, if you believe— [Modestly]

DALTON. Sir, the whole community owes you a debt of gratitude which can never repay. I shall have to thank your valuable assistance in discovering the author of the audacious forgeries.

HAWKSHAW. Have you any clients?

DALTON. I believe they are the work of a late clerk of ours—who went into gay company, poor lad, and came back gone to the bad. He knew the signatures of the great London gold-sellers' signature, as they were called, correspondents of ours.

HAWKSHAW. Is the lad in London?

DALTON. He was within a week.

HAWKSHAW. Can you give me a description of him? Age—height—hair—eyes—complexion—last seen in—dress—haunts—habits—associations—[Significantly]—any female connections?

DALTON. Unluckily I know very little of him personally. My partner, Walter Wake, can supply all the information you want.

HAWKSHAW. Where shall I find him?

RON. Here's our card. We'll cab and question him at our
Or [*As if struck by a sudden*
suppose you bring him here —
we may all lay our heads to-

KSHAW. You'll not leave this
ill I come back?

RON. If Mr. Gibson will permit
wait.

GIBSON. I shall feel extremely
to you.

KSHAW. You may expect me
half an hour at farthest —
returns] — egad, sir, you've
narrow escape. I had the
open under the desk.

[*Showing handcuffs*]

RON. Ha, ha, ha! how very
t.

[*Takes and examines handcuffs*
curiously]

KSHAW. But I'll soon be down
youngster.

GIBSON. If only he hasn't left
a.

KSHAW. Bless you — they can't
London. Like the moths, they
nd turn about the candle till
urn the wings.

RON. Ah! thanks to men like
How little society is aware of
owes its detective benefactors.

KSHAW. There's the satisfaction
g one's duty — and something
w and then.

GIBSON. Ah! a good, round

KSHAW. That's not bad; but
something better than that.

RON. Indeed!

KSHAW. Paying off old scores.
f I could only clinch the darbies
Dalton's wrists.

RON. Dalton! What's your
against him in particular?

KSHAW. He was the death of
— the best mate I ever had —
Joe Skirrit. [*Draws his hands*
his eyes] I shall never work
ch another.

GIBSON. Did he murder him?

KSHAW. Not to say murdered
ght out. But he spoiled him —
him a clip on the head with a
— a life-preserver. He was
his own man afterwards. He
be force on a pension, but he
sort of paralysed, and then got
in his head. I was sitting with
e week before he died — "Jack,"

he says, — it was Joe and Jack with us,
—"Jack," he says, "I lay my death at
the Tiger's door" — that was the name
we had for Dalton in the force. "You'll
look after him, Jack," he says, "for the
sake of your old mate." By —, no,
I won't say what I said, but I promised
him to be even with Jem Dalton, and
I'll keep my word.

DALTON. You know this Dalton?

HAWKSHAW. Know him! He has
as many outsides as he has aliases.
You may identify him for a felon to-
day, and pull your hat off to him for a
parson to-morrow. But I'll hunt him
out of all his skins; — and my best
night's sleep will be the day I've
brought Jem Dalton to the dock!

DALTON. Mr. Hawkshaw, I wish
you every success!

HAWKSHAW. But I've other fish to
fry now. [*Going up, looks at card*]
Wake Brothers, Buckle's Wharf, Lime-
house. [*Exit HAWKSHAW*]

DALTON. Ask anybody for our office.
[*Aside*] And if anybody can tell you
I shall be astonished.

[*Following him up, then returning*]

MR. GIBSON. I'm really ashamed to
keep you waiting, sir.

DALTON. Oh, I can write my letters
here. [*Pointing to the counter*] If you
don't mind trusting me all alone in
your office.

MR. GIBSON. My dear sir, if you
were Dalton himself — the redoubtable
Tiger — you couldn't steal ledgers and
day-books, and there's nothing more
valuable here — except, by the way,
my queer old depositor, Miss Faddle's,
five thousand, that she insists on my
keeping here in the office in gold, as
she believes neither in banks nor bank-
notes. — And, talking of notes, I may
as well lock up these you so hand-
somely paid me. [*Goes to safe*]

DALTON. Not believe in notes! In-
fatuated woman! [*Aside*] I hope he'll
like mine.

MR. GIBSON [*locks safe*]. I'll leave
you to write your letters.

[*Exit Mr. Gibson into his office*]

DALTON. Phew! [*Whistles low*]
That's the narrowest shave I ever
had. So, Jack Hawkshaw, you'll be
even with Jem Dalton yet, will you?
You may add this day's work to the
score against him. How the old boy
swallowed my soft sawder and Brum-
magem notes! They're beauties! It
would be a pity to leave them in his

hands — and five thousand shiners, p'raps, alongside of 'em. Come — I've my wax handy — never travel without my tools. Here goes for a squeeze at the lock of this safe.

[Goes to safe, and by means of a pick-lock applies wax to the wards of the lock by the key-hole. Music, piano]

[Enter BRIERLY]

BRIERLY *[hangs up hat]*. Clerks not returned. Hawkshaw gone? *[Sees DALTON at safe]* Holloa! who's this? Tampering with the safe! — Hold hard there! *[He seizes DALTON, who turns]*

DALTON. *[Aside]* Brierly! Hands off, young 'un. Don't you know a locksmith when you see him?

BRIERLY. Gammon! Who are you? How came you here? What are you doing with that safe?

DALTON. You ask a great deal too many questions.

BRIERLY. I'll trouble you to answer 'em.

DALTON. By what right?

BRIERLY. I'm messenger in this office, and I've a right to know who touches a lock here.

DALTON. You messenger here? Indeed! and suppose I took to asking questions — you mightn't be so keen of answering yourself — Robert Brierly!

BRIERLY. You know me!

DALTON. Yes. And your character from your last place — Port —

BRIERLY *[terrified]*. Hush!

DALTON. Your hair hasn't grown so fast but I can see traces of the prison-crop.

BRIERLY. For mercy's sake!

DALTON. Silence for silence. Ask me no questions and I'll press for no answers.

BRIERLY. You must explain your business here to Mr. Gibson. I suspected you for a thief.

DALTON. And I know you for a jail-bird. Let's see whose information will go the farthest. There, I'll make you a fair offer, Robert Brierly. Let me pass, and I leave this place without breathing a word to your employer that you're fresh from a sentence of penal servitude for four years. Detain me, and I denounce you for the convict you are! *[A knock at the door]*

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. *[Without]* Mr. Brierly!

BRIERLY. Hush! Coming, Mr. loughby.

DALTON. Is it a bargain?

BRIERLY. Go — go — anything to escape this exposure.

[Giving him his hat, etc. counter]

DALTON. *[At door]* There's Moss, waiting for me outside. I shall blow the lad to Gibson. He'll be useful to us, and I owe him something for spoiling my squeeze. *[Exit D.]*

[Enter MRS. WILLOUGHBY]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Which, I ask pardon for intruding, not used to an office, and knowing my I 'ope. But it's gettin' on for a couple of past eleven, Mr. Robert, and to the latest they will do it, and the fastest all set out beautiful — and parties is a gettin' impatient, it's no more than natural, bless and Sam that rampagious — whatever's the matter? You struck all of a heap like!

BRIERLY. Oh, nothing, no. It's natural, you know, a man looks queer on his wedding morning. There, go and tell May I'll be with her directly.

[Enter SAM]

SAM. Come along, Bob, we're tired of waiting, especially this *[Sings nigger song]* Come along!

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. *[Admiringly]* Oh, that boy! If it ain't enough to make any grandmother's 'eart proud!

BRIERLY. Go — go — I'll follow — I've some business matters to do.

SAM. A nice state for business in — I don't think — There, go *[Looks at him]* This is what comes of getting married! If it ain't another warning to a young fellow like me!

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Drat your perence.

SAM. But the party's waiting on the stairs, and we're wanted to keep in spirits, so come along, granny!

[Polks out with MRS. WILLOUGHBY]

BRIERLY. Known! Threatened by Hawkshaw — only denounced by this man.

[Enter Moss]

Moss. Mr. Gibson, if you please.

BRIERLY. He's in his office, that way. *[Points to office]*

s. I remember the young man
A convict get himself into a
able situation! It is a duty
es to society to put his employer
guard.

[Exit]
RLY. Yes — he's gone — I can
ny breath again — I was wrong
him go. But to have the cup
s lip, and see it struck away —
dn't — I couldn't — even the
ve had mercy. When we're
I, I'll tell Mr. Gibson all.

er Moss and Mr. GIBSON from
his office]

s. You can question him, sir,
don't believe me: any way I've
y duty, and that's what I look

[Exit Moss]
RLY. Here's the money for the
sir.

[GIBSON takes money — BRIERLY
is going]

GIBSON. Robert.

RLY. Sir!

GIBSON. Where are you going?

RLY. To dress for church, sir.

GIBSON. Stay here.

RLY. Sir!

GIBSON. You have deceived

RLY. Mr. Gibson —

GIBSON. I know all — your
— your conviction — your pun-

RLY. Mercy! mercy!

GIBSON. Unhappy young man.

RLY. Ah! unhappy you may
all me. I was sentenced, sir,
was not guilty. It's true, sir,
don't expect you to believe it
worked out my sentence, sir
hadn't a mark against me at
d — you may ask 'em — here's
ket-of-leave, sir. You own I've
eady, and industrious since I
ere. — By heaven's help I mean
o still — indeed I do.

GIBSON. I dare say, but I
ink of my own credit and char-
If it was buzzed about that
'a ticket-of-leave man in my
ment —

GREEN JONES, MAY, EMILY,
RS. WILLOUGHBY and SAM]

WILLOUGHBY. Which, axin'
ardon, Mr. Gibson, we're all
and the cab is a-waitin' —

And the parson getting cold.

MAY. Robert, why are you not
dressed? What is the matter?

BRIERLY. Heaven help thee, my
poor lass!

MAY. You are pale — you tremble
— you are ill! Oh, speak! what is it?

BRIERLY. Bear up, May. But our
marriage — cannot — be — yet —
awhile.

ALL. The wedding put off!

[MAY stands aghast]

EMILY. No bonnets!

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. And
no breakfasts.

GREEN. By Jove!

SAM. Here's a go!

MAY. Am I dreaming? Robert,
what does this mean?

BRIERLY. It's hard to bear. Keep
up your heart — I'm discharged. He
knows all.

MAY. [To GIBSON] Oh, sir, you
couldn't have the heart — say it was
not true.

MR. GIBSON. Sorry for it. You have
both deceived me — you must both
leave the place.

BRIERLY. You hear? — Come, May.

MAY. I'll go, sir. It was I deceived
you, not he. Only give him a chance —

[Music — piano till end]

BRIERLY. Never heed her, sir.
She'd have told you long ago, but I
hadn't the heart — My poor lass!
Let her bide here, sir — I'll not trouble
you — I'll leave the country — I'll 'list!

MAY. Hush, hush, Robert! We
were wrong to hide the truth; we are
sorely punished — but if you've courage
to face what's before us, I have.

BRIERLY. My brave wench! Thank
you for all your kindness, sir. Good-
bye, friends. Come, May, we'll go
together.

END OF ACT THIRD

ACT IV

SCENE FIRST. — *Bridgewater Arms — A
large, gaily decorated Coffee-Room,
set out with tables and benches; a
bar crosses the corner of room, with
gaily painted hogsheads ranged
above it; beer engine, etc., at the
head of bar; door to street in flat;
door to parlour, curtained windows
in flat; a piano; a trap leading
to cellar, practicable, up stage, near*

the end of the bar; table and three chairs in front, table and benches]

[MOSS, with bags of silver, and DALTON seated at table. — MALTBY waiting upon them]

MALTBY. [At back of table] Pint of sherry. [Putting it down] Very curious! — Yes, Mr. Moss, it's a pleasure to see you, sir, at the Bridgewater Arms; though it ain't the Bellevue Gardens! worse luck!

MOSS. Ah! ups and downs is this lot of life, Mr. Maltby. You'll let me know when Mr. Tottie comes?

MALTBY. Ah, the subcontractor for the main sewer in the next street. Such a nuisance! stops all traffic —

MOSS. But sends you all the navvies. It's here they're taken on, and paid — you know.

MALTBY. Connexion not aristocratic, but beery; we do four butts a-week at the bar, to say nothing of the concert room upstairs.

DALTON. What, the navvies like music to their malt, do they?

MALTBY. Oh, yes, sir! I introduced the arts from the West End. The roughs adore music, especially selections from the Italian Opera, and as for sentiment and sensation, if you could hear Miss St. Evremond touch them up with the "Maniac's Tear", the new sensation ballad, by a gifted composer, attached to the establishment, and sold at the bar, price one shilling: why, we've disposed of three dozen "Maniac's Tears" on a pay night — astonishing how it goes down!

DALTON. With the beer?

[Enter MRS. GREEN JONES, door in flat, and comes down. — She wears a handsome evening dress under her shawl]

MALTBY [coming forward to her]. Here comes Mrs. Jones — gentlemen, this is the great and gifted creature I was alluding to.

EMILY. Go along with your nonsense!

MALTBY. Miss St. Evremond, the great sensation balladist, formerly of the Nobility's Concerts, and her Majesty's Theatre — [Aside] — in the ballet.

MOSS. Proud to make the acquaintance of so gifted an artiste.

EMILY. You're very obliging, I'm sure. [Taking off her bonnet and shawl,

and smoothing her hair. — To MA How's the room to-night?

MALTBY. Tidy, but nothing to it will be. It's the navvies' pay — you know.

EMILY. Navvies! oh, Lord! [To think of Emily St. Evremond with her sweetness upon an audience of navigators!]

DALTON. They are not aristocrats but they are appreciative.

EMILY. Yes! poor creatures! do know a good thing when they get it! [To MA]

DALTON. If Miss St. Evremond oblige us with a ballad —

MALTBY. "The Maniac's Tear"

EMILY. If these gentlemen would mind.

DALTON. On the contrary — with music; don't we, Moss?

MOSS. I doat upon it; especially Handel!

EMILY. But where's the accompanist?

MALTBY. I regret to say the piano is disgracefully screwed!

EMILY. Oh, never mind, Jones accompany me! [Going up] Come Green Jones; you're wanted!

[MALTBY opens piano]

[Enter GREEN JONES with basket of trotters, door in flat — they come down]

GREEN. In the trotter line, or is it so tuneless?

EMILY. To accompany me on piano! [She arranges herself]

GREEN. Till you're ready, gentlemen wouldn't like to try a trotter would they? A penny a set, and this morning's boiling — if I tempt you? They're delicious with a soupçon of pepper.

MALTBY. No, no, Mr. Jones, you are not your style of customers.

GREEN. Excuse me, Mr. Maltby. I'm aware trotters are not known in good society; but they go down well with the relish, even with people accustomed to entrées! I liked 'em as a change before I was reduced to them by my salesmanship.

MALTBY. [To MRS. GREEN JONES] Perhaps you'd give us the "Maniac's Tear"?

EMILY. I can't do it without letting down my back hair!

DALTON. Oh, down with the hair, by all means!

ILY. You're very kind. Jones!
e's the glass?

[JONES produces a hand-glass
from basket — EMILY arranges
her hair by glass]

REEN [seating himself at the piano].
word of preface, gentlemen. It's
sation ballad! scene — Criminal
, Bedlam! Miss St. Evremond
interesting lunatic — with lucid
als. She has murdered her hus-
— [Finds basket in his way]
y! if you'd just shift those trotters
d her three children, and is sup-
to be remonstrating with one
e lunacy commissioners on the
y of her confinement!

[Music — EMILY sings a sen-
sation ballad, "The Maniac's
Tear", accompanied by her
husband — all applaud]

LTBY. [going off]. Now — look
Miss St. Evremond. The Wis-
Warblers are at their last chorus.

[Exit MALTBY]

ILY. [To her husband] Bye-bye,
till after the concert — you know
't be seen speaking to you while
arry that basket.

REEN. True — in the humble
-man who would suspect the
nd of the brilliant St. Evremond!
's something romantic in it — I
round the room — I hear you
rsally admired — visibly ap-
ed — audibly adored. Oh, agony!
ILY. Now, Jones — you are going
e jealous again! I do believe
sy's at the bottom of those
rs!

[Exit MRS. and Mr. GREEN JONES]
ss. Now's our time — while the
upstairs are having their ears
d. You've the tools ready for
ng that crib in St. Nicholas

LTON. Yes, but tools ain't enough
must have a clear stage, and a
ho knows the premises.

ss. I've managed that — nobody
in the place but the old house-
r and her precious grandson.

LTON. He's as sharp as a terrier
-and can bite too — a young
nt. If I come across him!

[Threateningly]

ss. No occasion for that —
e so violent. I've made the
g man's acquaintance. I've asked
to meet me here to-night for a
little game — his revenge, I

called it. I'll dose the lad till he's
past leaving the place. You drop a
hint to the old lady — she'll come to
take care of him. The coast will be
clear yonder.

DALTON. And the five thousand
shiners will be nailed in the turning of
a jemmy. If we had that young
Brierly in the job — he knows the
way about the place blindfold. But
he's on the square, he is — bent on
earning an honest livelihood.

Moss. But I've blown him wherever
he's got work. He *must* dance to our
tune at last.

DALTON. Ah! if *you've* got him in
hand! Work *him* into the job, and
I'll jump the crib to-night.

Moss. He's applied to be taken on
at the contract works near here. This
is the pay night — Tottie, the sub-
contractor, is a friend of mine —

DALTON. He's lucky!

Moss. Yes. I find him the cash
at twenty per cent., till his certificates
are allowed by the engineer. 'Taint
heavy interest, but there's no risk —
a word from me, and he'd discharge
every navvie in his gang. But I've
only to breathe jail-bird, and there's
no need of a discharge. The men
themselves would work the lad off the
job. They are sad roughs, but they've
a horror of jail-birds.

DALTON. Ah! nobody likes the Port-
land mark. I know that — I've tried
the honest dodge, too.

Moss. It don't answer.

DALTON. It didn't with me. I had
a friend, like you, always after me.
Whatever I tried, I was blown as a
convict, and hunted out from honest
men.

Moss. And then you met me —
and I was good to you — wasn't I?

DALTON. Yes. You were very kind.

Moss. Always allowed you hand-
some for the swag you brought, and
put you up to no end of good things!
and I'll stick by you, my dear — I
never drop a friend.

DALTON. No, till the hangman takes
your place at his side.

[Presses his elbows to his side in
the attitude of a man pinioned]

Moss. Don't be disagreeable, my
dear — you give me a cold shiver.
Hush! here come the navvies.

[Enter the NAVIGATORS noisily, through
door. They seat themselves at their

tables, calling, some for pots of beer, some for quarterns of gin. The POTMAN and WAITERS bustle about with MALTBY superintending and taking money. BRIERLY follows. Enter HAWKSHAW, disguised as a navvy. He appears flustered with drink — goes to one of the tables, and, assuming a country dialect, calls swaggeringly]

HAWKSHAW. Gallon o' beer! measter.

MALTBY. A gallon?

HAWKSHAW. Aye, and another when that's done — I'm in brass to-night, and I stand treat. Here, mates, who'll drink? [NAVIES crowd, with loud exclamations to his table — beer is brought — HAWKSHAW to BRIERLY, who is seated left of table] Come, won't thou drink, my little flannel back?

BRIERLY. No, thank you; I've a poor head for liquor, and I've not had my supper yet.

HAWKSHAW. Thou'st sure it's not pride?

BRIERLY. Pride? I've no call for pride — I've come to try and get taken on at the works.

HAWKSHAW. Well, thou looks a tough 'un. There's cast-iron Jack was smashed in the tunnel this morning. There'll be room for thee, if thou canst swing the old anchor.

BRIERLY. The old anchor?

HAWKSHAW. Ha, ha! It's easy to see thou's no banker. Why, the pick, to be sure — the groundsmen's breadwinner. Halloa, mates, keep a drop of grog for Ginger. [Goes back to table]

NAVIES. Aye, aye!

HAWKSHAW. Here's the old anchor, boys, and long may we live to swing it.

ALL. The pick forever. Hip, hip hurrah!

MALTBY [coming down]. Mr. Tottie's in the parlor, and wishes particularly to see you, Mr. Moss.

MOSS. I should think he did — say I'm coming. [Exit MALTBY]

DALTON. [Aside to Moss] You look after the Lancashire lad — yonder he sits — and I'll drop a hint to the old woman. Stay, we'd better work from the old church-yard of St. Nicholas — there's a door opens into it from the crib. I'll hide the tools behind one of the tombstones.

MOSS. Beautiful! Sacred to the

memory of Jem Dalton's jack-in-box! Ha, ha, ha!

[Exit MOSS into parlor, DALTON by the street door]

HAWKSHAW. Here, landlord, your change out of that. [Fling sovereign on table] Call for more b mates, till I come back.

[Exit, staggering like a drunken man, after DALTON]

1ST NAVVY. Thou'llt come b mate?

HAWKSHAW. Aye, aye, boys, rectly. [At door] Contractor's in parlor wi' the week's pay.

1ST NAVVY. Here's thy health!

ALL. [Sing] "For he's a jolly fellow," etc.

[Enter GREEN JONES]

GREEN. Emily is bringing down house in the "Maniac." I can't st it; my feelings as a husband trampled on. But she's a trump, — and what a talent! By heaven ever I get my head above water ag I won't fool away my money as done; no, I'll take a theatre at West End, and bring out my wife everything. It will be an imm success; meanwhile, till the pou present themselves, let me look a the pence. Trotters, gents, trot — penny the set, and this morni boiling. [He goes up among tailors]

1ST NAVVY. Stop till we get br we'll clear out thy basket.

[Exit NAVVIES, followed by GREEN JONES]

BRIERLY. Yes, the old anchor is last chance — I've tried every road an honest livelihood, and, one a another, they are barred in my. Everywhere that dreadful word, "bird," seems to be breathed in the about me — sometimes in a let sometimes in a hint, sometimes a c of the newspaper with my trial, then it's the same story — sorry part with me — no complaint to m — but can't keep a ticket-of-le man. Who can it be that hunts down this way? Hawkshaw spa me. I've done no man a wrong poor fellows like me should have enemies. I wouldn't care for mys but my poor lass, my brave, tr hearted May; I'm dragging her d along with me. Ah! here she is.

[Enter MAY, poorly dressed — she ha can, and some food in a bundle]

[Cheerfully] Well, Robert, I said I shouldn't be long; I've got your supper.

BRIERLY. Thank thee, darling — not hungry — thou'st been out to work all the day — eat thyself to need'st strength most.

MAY. Nay, dear, what will become of you if you lose heart? But if you'll be a good boy, and take your tea [Opens and takes bread from bundle], I'll give you a piece of good news — for it's good for both of us.

BRIERLY. That will be something

MAY. I've got a promise of work from the Sailor's Ready-Made Clothing House near here. It won't be long, but it will keep the wolf from the door till you get another situation. You tried if the contractor here would take you?

BRIERLY. Not yet. He's in yonder with the men. He'll send for me; but I scarcely dare to ask him. Oh, lass, I've held on hard to hope, and it feels as if it was slipping out of my hand at last!

MAY. Robert, dear Robert, grasp it; so long as we do what is right, it will come clear at last; we're in the hands, dear — you know we are.

BRIERLY. I begin to doubt it, lass, but, indeed.

MAY. No, no; never doubt that, my heart will give way too —

BRIERLY. And thou that has had to struggle for both of us. Every blow has fallen, every door that has been shut between me and an honest trade, every time that clean hands have been drawn away from mine, every respectable faces turned aside as I came near them, I've come to thee for comfort, and love, and hope, and to find them till now.

MAY. Oh, yes! what's the good of my fine wife? It's hard weather for women best, dear; you men are all so stout-hearted.

BRIERLY. I'd not mind the misery for myself; 'tis for thee.

MAY. I don't complain — do I?

BRIERLY. Never! But, nevertheless brought thee to sorrow, and pain and shame. Till I came back to thee thou hadst friends, work and trade. But since Mr. Gibson dismissed us off, the blight that has fallen on me has reached thee too, my bravest, honestest, brightest lass

that ever doubled a man's joys, and halved his burdens. Oh! it's too bad — [Rises] — it kills the heart out of me — it makes me mad! [Crosses]

MAY [following him]. I tell you, 'twill all come clear at last, if we are only true to ourselves — to each other. I've work promised, and perhaps you may be taken on here. I spy bright days before us still.

BRIERLY. Bright days! I can't see them through the prison cloud that stands like a dark wall between me and honest labour. May, lass, I sometimes think I had better let it all go — run — 'list — make a hole in the water, anything that would rid thee of me; thou could'st make thy way alone.

MAY. Oh, Robert, that is cruel! nothing others could do to us could hurt me like those words from you; we are man and wife, and we'll take life as man and wife should, hand-in-hand: where you go, I will go; where you suffer, I will be there to comfort; and when better times come, — as come they will — we will thank God for them together.

BRIERLY. I'll try to hope.

MAY. And you won't heed the black thoughts that come over you when you're alone?

BRIERLY. I'll do my best to fight 'em off.

MAY. That's a brave dear. I'm only going to the warehouse; I shall be back soon. Good-bye, dearest. Remember, when the clouds are thickest, the sun still shines behind them.

[Exit]

BRIERLY. Bless that brave, bright heart; she puts strength into me, in spite of the devilish doubts that have got their claws about my throat. Yes, I will try once more.

[The NAVIGATORS come noisily out of parlour, and re-seat themselves at the tables]

[Enter MOSS, from parlour]

MOSS [speaking off]. So, all paid at last?

[Re-enter DALTON, and HAWKSHAW, after him]

DALTON. [To MOSS] All right, the lad's coming. I've tipped the old woman the office, and planted the tools.

[He looks at table]

HAWKSHAW [tapping BRIERLY on the shoulder, who starts suddenly]. All

the gang ha' gotten their brass — Tottie's takin' on men now, my little flannel-back. Thou go in, and put on a bold face — Tottie likes chaps as speaks up to him.

[HAWKSHAW returns to his MATES]

BRIERLY. If this chance fail — God help us both.

[Exit into parlour. NAVVIES at the table clamour and fight, and shout over their drink. Moss glances at BRIERLY as he passes]

Moss. There he goes!

[NAVVIES clamour]

DALTON. It would be a pity to let a ticket-of-leave man in among all those nice, sober, well-behaved young men.

[Clamour]

Moss. I must blow him again; he ought to be near the end of his tether, now. [Enter SAM WILLOUGHBY] Here comes our young friend. [Coaxingly to SAM WILLOUGHBY] Ah, my dear — so you've come out for a little hanky-panky with old Moss. Sit down. My friend, Mr. Walker. What'll you have?

SAM. I don't care — I'm game for anything from sherry to rum-shrub. Suppose we begin with a brandy and soda, to cool the coppers!

DALTON. [Calls] Brandy and soda, Maltby.

SAM. I had an awful go in of it last night at the balls, and dropped into a lot of 'em like a three-year-old.

[Imitates action of billiard-play, with his walking-cane for a cue]

Moss. Billiards, too! Lord! what a clever young chap you are!

[MALTBY brings soda-water and brandy]

SAM [sits at back of table]. Yes, I know a thing or two. [Takes glass] I wasn't born blind, like a terrier pup — I rayther think. — But you promised me my revenge, you old screw. [Drinks] That's the tippie to steady a chap's hand. Now, fork out the pictures, old boy.

Moss [shuffling cards]. Oh, what a boy you are! What shall it be this time?

SAM. A round or two of brag to begin with, and a few deals at Blind Hookums for a wind-up.

[As he deals, enter BRIERLY from inner room]

BRIERLY. Heaven be thanked, another chance yet!

HAWKSHAW. [As BRIERLY po Well, my little flannel-back, ha taken you on?

BRIERLY. Yes, I'm to come to to-morrow morning. I'm in Gin gang.

HAWKSHAW. I'm Ginger. G let's wet thy footing.

BRIERLY. My last shilling. [7 it down] It's all I have, but y welcome.

HAWKSHAW. Nay, it sha'n't be Ginger Bill ever cleared a chap neither. I'll pay for thy footing, thou'lt stand beer thy first pay n Here, measter, a gallon to wet t' chap's name. Bob, we'll christen 'cause thou hadst but a shillin Ha, ha, ha!

NAVVIES [laugh — They all dr Here's Bob's health.

BRIERLY [recognising SAM]. Willoughby, in this place, and the devil's books, too. Oh! I'm to see this — sorry — sorry. — Poo woman! If she knew!

SAM. [Calling] Best card! [S ing a card] First stake!

DALTON. Stop a minute — ac diamonds!

SAM. First stake to you. Han never mind, [Deal] one can't lose r at this game — I go a tizzy.

[Puts a stake on c

Moss. A shilling.

SAM. Five.

DALTON. I stand.

Moss. Ten.

SAM. A sovereign! thirty- Third stake, and the brag. [S his cards] Pair royal — pair — a spades. Fork over the shiners.

Moss. Oh, dear! oh, dear! ruined — ruined.

DALTON. [Calls] Two colds out.

SAM. Now, for my deal.

[He deals three cards to ea

MALTBY brings brandy]

Moss. Best card! First stake stand.

SAM. I brag. Hang peddling tizzies — half a crown.

DALTON. Five.

[Moss looks at SAM's hand, signals to DALTON]

SAM. Ten.

DALTON. A sovereign.

Moss. Oh! dear, what a boy i How much have you got in pocket?

. Lots! I'm paid quarterly
Had my quarter to-day! —
er cold without. [Calls] Let's
I'll hold on. [Draws card]
-four — overdrawn — confound
ow let's see your hand.

[To DALTON]

TON. Three pairs — fives, trays,
, and the knave of clubs.

. Hang it all! How is a man
nd against such cards?

ERLY. How is a man to stand
t such play? He was looking
your cards, and see — [Seizes a
om Moss's lap] — the ace of
nds! Handy to make pairs royal!
if you won't believe me, believe
own eyes: you're being cheated,
l. You old villain — you should
amed of yourself!

ss. Oh, dear! oh, dear! to say
hings to a man at my time of

TON. We're not to be bullied.

[threateningly]. You give me
ny money.

[MALTBY comes down]

ss. I sha'n't! Here, Mr.
y.

MBY. Come, be off. I can't
any disturbance here. Mr. Moss
most respectable man, and his
s are as respectable as he is,
s for you — if you won't leave
om quietly, you must be made to.

. Who'll make me? Come on,
ing] both of you! Stand up to
ob, I'm not afraid!

[NAVIGATORS gather round]

[Enter MRS. WILLOUGHBY]

s. WILLOUGHBY. It's his voice —
well I know it. Oh! Sam —
I've found you at last!

. Well, suppose you have —
then?

s. WILLOUGHBY. What then!
dear — oh! dear. And I've run
into that state of trimmle and
ration, and if it hadn't been for
ntleman I might have been east,
rest, and high, and low, but it's
"Bridgewater Arms" you'll find
he says — and here I have found
sure enough — and you come
with me this minute.

ss. Ah! you'd better go home
he old lady!

TON. And if you take my ad-
you'll send him to bed without
pper.

SAM. [MRS. WILLOUGHBY pushing
him away] I ain't a-going. Now, you
give me my money — I'm not going
to stand any nonsense.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. And this is
what he calls attending elocution
class of a night, and improvin' of his
mind — and me a-toilin' and a-moilin'
for him — which I'm his own grand-
mother, gentlemen, and him the only
one of three. [Still holding him]

SAM. It's no use, granny, I'm not
a child to be tied to your apron strings
— you've no right to be naggin' and
aggravatin', and coming after a chap,
to make him look small this way. I
don't mind — I sha'n't stir. There!

[He flings his cap on the table, and
sits on it, swinging his legs]

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. Oh! dear — oh!
dear — he'll break my heart, he will.

BRIERLY. Sam, my lad, listen to
me, if you won't hearken to her. —
A bad beginning makes a bad end, and
you're beginning badly: the road you're
on leads downwards, and once in the
slough at the bottom o't — oh! trust
one who knows it — there's no working
clear again. You may hold out your
hand — you may cry for help — you
may struggle hard — but the quick-
sands are under your foot — and you
sink down, down, till they close over
your head.

HAWKSHAW. [Seated] Hear the
little flannel-back. He talks like a
missionary, he do. [All laugh]

BRIERLY. Go home, my lad — go
home with her — be a son to her —
love her as she has loved thee — make
her old days happy — be sober, be
steady, and when you're a grown
man, and her chair's empty at t'chim-
ney corner, you'll mayhap remember
this day, and be thankful you took the
advice of poor, hunted-down, broken-
hearted Bob Brierly.

SAM [who has betrayed signs of
feeling while BRIERLY has been speak-
ing]. I don't know — I feel so queer
— and — don't look at me. [To MRS.
WILLOUGHBY — gets off table and crosses
to her] I've been a regular bad 'un,
granny — I'm very sorry — I'll put
on the curb — I'll pull up — that is,
I'll try.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY [rises]. Oh!
bless him for those words! Bless you!
my own dear boy. [Crosses to BRIERLY]
And you, too, Mr. Brierly — which if
the widow's blessing is worth while,

it's yours, and many of them. Oh! dear — oh! dear.

[Cries — Gets out her handkerchief, and in doing so drops her purse and keys — MOSS picks up the purse — MRS. WILLOUGHBY catches his eye as he does so — DALTON, unobserved by all, picks up the keys]

BRIERLY. Nay, don't thank me. It's late now. Go home — Sam, give her your arm.

MOSS. Here's your purse, old lady. [Making a final attempt on SAM] What, you won't stay and make a night of it?

MRS. WILLOUGHBY. I'll trouble you not to speak to my grandson. If ever an old man was ashamed of his grey hairs, it's *you* ought to be. Come, Sam.

MOSS. [Aside] Baulked.

DALTON. No — I didn't give her back her keys.

SAM [turning to Moss]. If I wasn't a-going to turn over a new leaf — Oh, wouldn't I like to pitch into you!

[Exit SAM and MRS. WILLOUGHBY]

HAWKSHAW [pretending to be very drunk]. And so should I — an old varmint — and so would all of us; — you're bad enough for a tommy shop-keeper.

NAVVIES. Aye, that he is — ought to be ashamed of himself.

MOSS. And who accuses me? A nice chap, this, to take away honest folk's characters!

HAWKSHAW. Stow that! He's one of us now — a regular blue-stocking. Tottie's taken him on! He's paid his footing — eh, mates?

ALL. Aye — aye.

HAWKSHAW. Here's Bob's health, mates.

ALL. Aye — aye.

MOSS. Stop; before you drink that health, best know the man you're drinking to. You're a rough lot, I know; but you're honest men.

BRIERLY. Oh, man, if you've a heart — [Rises]

MOSS. I owe you one — I always pay my debts — [To NAVVIES] You're not felons, nor company for felons — for jail-birds.

ALL. Jail-birds!

MOSS. Aye — jail-birds. Ask him how long it is since he served his four years at Portland. [HAWKSHAW goes up, crosses, and sits quietly at head of

table] Look! — he turns pale — he falls; he can't deny it!

[BRIERLY turns away]

HAWKSHAW. Who knows, lad perhaps he's repented.

ALL. No — no. [Grumbling] jail-bird — no convict — no ticket-leaver.

[They turn away from BRIERLY]

BRIERLY. Aye, mates — it's true I was convicted, but I wasn't guilty. I served my time. I came out an altered man. I tried hard to earn an honest livelihood — [They all turn away] Don't all turn away from me. Give me a chance — only a chance.

ALL. No — no.

BRIERLY. Nay, then, my last hope is gone — I can fight no longer!

[Throws his head on his hand in despair]

[The NAVIGATORS retire; HAWKSHAW, pretending to be drunk, appears to sleep head on table. The NAVIGATORS drop off, and exit one by one]

MOSS. [To DALTON] Honest! bowled out at last! It's our good now. [Puts his hand on BRIERLY's shoulder] I say, my friend —

BRIERLY. Eh! [Looking up] Yes, the man who told them! [Fiercely]

MOSS. Yes — yes; but don't throw yourself in a passion.

BRIERLY. Only tell me — Is it those who have followed me in this way — who have turned all against me — who have kept me from earning honest bread?

MOSS. Yes.

BRIERLY. But why, man, why? What had done you no wrong.

MOSS. Ask him. [Pointing to DALTON] He's an old friend of yours.

BRIERLY. I don't know him — I've seen that face before. Yes, it is — Jem Downey! Thou villain! [seizes him] I know thee now. Thou shalt answer to me for all this mischief.

DALTON. Easy does it, Bob. Hand off, and let's take things pleasantly.

BRIERLY. Not content with leading me into play, and drink, and devilry — with making me your tool, — you're sending me to a prison, it's you that have dogged me — have denounced me as a convict.

DALTON. Of course — you don't think any but an old friend would have taken such an interest in you.

ERLY. Did you want to close all against me but that which leads dock?

TON. Exactly.

[BRIERLY turns to Moss]
ss. Exactly.

TON. You see, when a man's mud himself, and can't get out he don't like to see another fight. Come, honest men won't have ing to do with you—best try black sheep—we ain't proud. [t] We've a job in hand will be making of all three. [Fills his Here, drink, and put some into you. [BRIERLY drinks] your sort—a lad of spirit—there was real grit in him—I, Mossey?

ss. You always gave him the f characters.

TON. Is it a bargain?

ERLY. Yes.

TON. There! Tip us the cracks—crook—so!

[Shakes hands with a peculiar grip]

[Enter MAY EDWARDS]

r. Robert—not here? [Sees ERLY, there he is. [Going—

Who are those with him?

TON. Now a caulker to clinch bargain. [They drink]

r. [In pain] Ah! Robert!

ERLY. You here—lass?

ss. Oh, these petticoats!

TON. You're not wanted here, woman.

r. He is my husband, sir. He strong—the drink will do him

TON. Ha, ha, ha! Brandy do no harm! It's mother's milk—another sip. [Fills BRIERLY's again] To your girl's good?

r. Robert, dear—come with

ERLY. Have you got work?

r. No—not yet.

ERLY. No more have I, lass. man took me on—it was the old

r. Oh, Robert—come!

ERLY. I shall stay with friends—thou go home, and don't sit me.

r. [imploringly]. Robert!

ERLY. I've my reasons.

TON. Come, are you going?

ERLY. [MAY clings to him]

Stand off, lass. You used to do what I bid you—stand off, I say.¹

[He shakes himself free from her]

MAY. Oh, Robert, Robert!

[Staggers back to table and sits]

BRIERLY. [Aside] I must—or they'll not trust me.

MAY. These men! to what have they tempted him in his despair? They sha'n't drive me away. [Aside] I'll watch.

[Exit, after a mute appeal to

BRIERLY. The tables before this have been cleared of all the NAVVIES except HAWKSHAW, who lies with his head on the table as if dead drunk—Moss rises]

MALTBY [re-entering from bar, shaking HAWKSHAW by the shoulder]. Now, my man, we're shutting up the bar.

HAWKSHAW. Shut up. I'm shut up. Good night. [Lets his head fall]

DALTON [coming down]. It's no use—he won't go, and I'm wanted in the concert room. [Exit MALTBY, calling] Bar closed!

MOSS. [To DALTON, suspiciously pointing to HAWKSHAW] There's a party—

DALTON [rising]. Eh? [Shaking HAWKSHAW] Holloa, wake up!

[HAWKSHAW grunts]

MOSS. He's in a deplorable state of intoxication.

DALTON. Yes, he's got his cargo—no danger in him—now for business. First and foremost, no more of this.

¹ Passages added since the first representation:

—Stand off, I say!

MAY. Oh! Robert, Robert! This is the first time you ever thrust me from you. He is a good, kind husband, gentlemen; but we have had sore trouble lately, and it has almost driven him wild sometimes. But, oh, if you have wives of your own at home, think of them and spare me. Don't drive him to drink. He's never taken to that in all our troubles. Robert, come home with me—our hearth may be cold, but Love has always sat beside it—our cupboard may be bare, but we have never yet wanted bread, and, with heaven's help, we never will. Robert, come—come with the wife that loves you—come, come!

—and don't sit up for me.

MAY. Robert!

—not wanted here at all.

MAY. Oh! Robert, Robert!

[Pockets the bottle. — To BRIERLY] You've heard the job we have in hand?

BRIERLY. Yes, but you have not told me where it is, or why you want my help.

DALTON. It's old Gibson's office. The five thousand you know — you know where it's kept.

BRIERLY. Well.

DALTON. And you'll take us to it?

BRIERLY. Yes.

DALTON. That's the ticket. Then we may as well start.

BRIERLY. Now?

DALTON. Now. My rule is, never put off till to-morrow the crib I can crack to-day. Besides, you might change your mind.

MOSS. One has heard of such things.

BRIERLY. But —

DALTON. You crane —

BRIERLY. No.

DALTON. I'll get a cab. [Going]

MOSS. And I'll get another — we'd best go single. [Following him]

DALTON. No, it wouldn't be polite to leave Mr. Brierly. [Aside] I don't half trust him — don't let him out of your sight. [Exit]

BRIERLY. [Aside] If he'll only leave me for a moment.

MOSS [sitting]. He's carried off the bottle, and the bar's shut up, or we might have a little refreshment.

BRIERLY. Perhaps, if you went to the landlord —

MOSS. No, I'd rather stay with you — I like your company, uncommon.

[Enter MALTBY, with a wine-basket and a candle]

MALTBY. Here's Mr. Tottie standing champagne round to the Wisconsin Warblers, and the bar stock all out, and the waiters in bed! I must go down to the cellar myself — very humiliating! [Goes to trap near bar] What with the light, and what with the liquor — I say, Mr. Moss, if you would lend me a hand?

BRIERLY. [Aside] I might give him the information. [To MALTBY] Let me help you, sir. [Goes to trap]

MOSS. Then I'll go too.

[MALTBY opens trap]

BRIERLY. The stairs are steep — two's quite enough.

MOSS. But I'm so fond of your company.

MALTBY. If you'll hold the light.

[BRIERLY takes it and MALTBY goes down]

BRIERLY. [Aside] A word'll do [Going down — Moss takes candle from him and gets between him and MALTBY]

MOSS. Allow me. The light will be in the middle. [Moss descends]

MALTBY. [From below] Now, then!

BRIERLY [rapidly closes the trap and stands upon it]. Now's the time! [Seizes the pen that stands on the table and writes, reading as he writes, quickly] "To Mr. Gibson, Peckham. The property will be entered to-night; I'm in it to the property and secure the robber R. Brierly." But who'll take it?

HAWKSHAW [who has got up and read the letter over his shoulder]. I'll be on the look-out.

BRIERLY. You?

HAWKSHAW [pulls off his cap, wig, and whiskers, and speaks in his own voice]. Hawkshaw, the detective! [Gives a pistol] Take that! I'll be on the look-out.

[HAWKSHAW lets his head fall as DALTON re-appears, beating at the door, and MOSS appears from the trap]

SCENE SECOND. — A Street in the City at Moonlight.

[Enter MRS. WILLOUGHBY and she is searching her pocket]

1 SECOND SCENE. — BEGIN

[Enter MAY EDWARDS, breathless and pale, head uncovered, — her hair dishevelled]

MAY. Thrust from his side — No, not his; but the fierce, hard man's, that and despair have changed him to! He me to go home. Home! (Shuddering) if there was any home for me, but where in his sorrow! I tried to watch — but pain in my heart blinded me, and I've wandered — wandered through the black in these stony streets! Oh — if I had died before this! If I could die now! the river can't be far off! — there is death there. (Shrieks) No, no, no — What is this tempting is this? Die and leave alone with his despair. Heaven help him forgive me! No; I will live — to him back to love and hope and faith. I must die, it shall be with my hand in our hearts against each other! If I but find him! Oh, Robert! Husband! Love! Where are you? Come to me! come to me! [She staggers off, distracted]

[Omit her appearance in the subsequent part of the scene]

Then enter MRS. WILLOUGHBY and S

You're sure you had 'em at the

WILLOUGHBY. Certain sure, or, leastwise, I let myself out the big street door, so I couldn't get that in the kitchen window, the little ones all in my pocket, noticed a hole in it only yesterday and it's best Holland, at one, and only worn three years, they ain't dropped into my skirt, they ain't a-hanging to my crino-

Oh, bother, granny; we can't get a regular Custom House search street; let's go back to the — perhaps they've found them.

MR. and MRS. GREEN JONES, with shawl and bonnet — he with his basket and the guitar]

N. There's only one set left; Providence has sent a cus- Trotters, mum?

[To MRS. WILLOUGHBY] [stopping him]. In my com- I'm surprised at you! conceal basket! [Advancing to MRS. WIL-] Why, if it isn't Mrs. Wil- and Sam! Why, don't you — the St. Evremonds?

WILLOUGHBY. Lor bless me — it is! and that dear, blessed man suffered so in his shins — which chance is its own reward; and ask what Mr. Jones —

r. Mr. St. Evremond.

WILLOUGHBY. Mr. St. Evre- what's he adoin'?

r. He's in business.

N. Yes, as a —

[Producing basket] [getting between MRS. WIL- and the basket]. As a sort of farmer. But whatever are you here at this time of night?

WILLOUGHBY. Oh, my dear, long story — and if you wears mend 'em, is my advice — whether they dropped, or they was picked —

[Impatiently] We can't get in my'st lost her keys.

r. And you haven't a latch? wouldn't have thought it of where did she lose them?

At the Bridgewater Arms — house is shut up now.

t. I'm engaged there; I don't locking Maltby up — I rather Come along, Jones, it's only

a step; [Aside to him] conceal that basket!

[Exeunt EMILY, SAM, and MRS. WILLOUGHBY]

GREEN. Emily thinks trotters low; she don't see that even the trotter trade may be elevated by politeness and attention to seasoning. [Exit]

[Enter DALTON, MOSS, and BRIERLY]

DALTON. Come along, Bob. All serene. [Aside] Where could he have got that six-shooter from? However, I nailed the caps in the cab. Moss, you be crow — two whistles if the coast ain't clear — we'll work the crib. Lucky I nailed the old woman's keys. They'll save tools and time. Give me the glim. [Moss takes out small lanthorn and gives it to him] Now, my lad, [To BRIERLY] take care; I'm a man of few words. — The pal who sticks by me, I stick by him, till death. But the man who tries to double on me, had better have the hangman looking after him, than Jem Dalton.

[Exeunt DALTON, BRIERLY, and Moss]

[Enter HAWKSHAW]

HAWKSHAW. This should be Cramp- ton's beat. [Gives a peculiar whistle, and enter a DETECTIVE] Take the fastest Hansom you can find; tear down with this to Peckham. [Gives note] Bring the old gent back to St. Nicholas Lane. Say he'll be wanted to make a charge. There's a crib to be jumped. I'm down on 'em. By the bye, lend me your barker. [DETECTIVE gives him a pistol, and exit] Jem Dalton's a tough customer. I always feel rather ashamed to burn powder. Any fool can blow a man's brains out. [Tries caps and charges] That lad's true blue after all. I had no idea that he tumbled to their game. He managed that letter uncommonly neat. Now for St. Nicholas Church- yard. When Jem Dalton planted his tools he never thought they'd come up darbies. [Exit]

[Enter MAY, breathless]

MAY. I've followed the cab as far as I could. I saw them get out, and lost them at the last turning. If I could only keep them in sight — if he could but hear my voice — Robert! Robert! [Exit]

SCENE THIRD. — *The Churchyard of St. Nicholas with tombstones and neglected trees; wall at back; up, side of stage, an iron railing supposed to separate the churchyard from the street; the wall of MR. GIBSON'S office, with practicable back door]*

[DALTON and BRIERLY drop over the wall, followed by MOSS]

DALTON. Now to transplant the tools! [Gets tools from behind tombstone] All right. Moss, look alive! Here's the door and the keys.

[Exit into office by back door, followed by BRIERLY]

MOSS. [On the look-out] Nice, quiet place — I like working in the city; I wish everybody lived out of town, and left their premises in charge of their housekeepers. [MAY is heard, singing the refrain of her song] What's that? That girl! She must have followed us. Here she is.

[Enter MAY in the street]

MAY [sees MOSS]. Oh, sir, you were with him! where is he?

MOSS. I'm just taking a little walk in my garden before retiring for the night; they've gone on to the Cave of Harmony — first turn on the left; there's a red lamp over the door; you can't miss it.

MAY. Oh, thank you — thank you!

MOSS. That's neat! Trust old Moss when anybody's to be made safe.

[HAWKSHAW during the above has dropped over wall at the back, seizes MOSS from behind, stops his mouth with one hand, and handcuffs him]

HAWKSHAW. Stir or speak, and you're a dead man!

DALTON [appearing at back door]. Hang the cloud! I can't see. Moss!

HAWKSHAW [imitating]. All serene!

DALTON [coming down]. We've done the job. [Calling to BRIERLY] Now, the box.

BRIERLY. [Within] I'll bring it.

[Comes from door with cash-box]

DALTON. We'll share at the Pigeons in Duck Lane. The box! quick!

BRIERLY. A word or two first.

DALTON. We can talk in the cab.

BRIERLY. No, here. You were my ruin four years ago.

DALTON. I've paid you back twice over. Come, the box.

BRIERLY. I suffered then for crime. Ever since, you've come between me and honest life — you broke me down — you've brought me to this.

DALTON. I suppose you mean you have a right to an extra share of the spoils.

BRIERLY. No, I mean that you're my prisoner, or you're a dead man.

[Seizes him and presents]

DALTON. Hands off, you fool!

BRIERLY. Nay then —

[Snaps fingers]

DALTON. You should have asked for the caps. Here they are.

[Holds them up]

BRIERLY. No matter; armed or unarmed, you don't escape me.

[A struggle — DALTON down BRIERLY as HAWKSHAW rushes from his concealment]

HAWKSHAW. Now, Jem Dalton, it's my turn!

DALTON. Hawkshaw!

[They struggle; HAWKSHAW forced down on a tombstone, nearly strangled; SAM appears outside the rails, springs upon them, seizes DALTON by the legs and throws him down. HAWKSHAW rises and puts handcuffs on DALTON; appears in the street]

MAY. Robert! Husband!

SAM. [Over DALTON] Lie still, you! You're a nice young fellow. [Crossing, looking over MOSS] You pair of nice young men!

HAWKSHAW. Now, Jem Dalton, remember poor Joe Skirrett — I promise him I'd do it. I've done it at last!

[Enter MR. GIBSON from back door, house, followed by MAY, who has gone round]

GIBSON. This way. Here the safe is. The safe open! The cash-box gone!

HAWKSHAW. No, saved.

[Gives it to him]

GIBSON. By whom?

HAWKSHAW. The man who is standing yonder, Robert Brierly.

MAY. My husband — would you kill him? Oh, mercy!

[She kneels over him]

GIBSON. Thank heaven, he's dead. I can repay him yet.

HAWKSHAW. Men don't die so easily. He's worth a dozen dead men.

. Look — he opens his eyes.
, speak to me — it's May —
r own wife.

ERLY. [*Faintly*] Darling, I'm
ou're here. It's only a clip of
ead. I'm none the worse. It
my game to snare those villains.

Who's there? Mr. Gibson? You
wouldn't trust me, sir, but I was not
ungrateful. You see, there may be
some good left in a "TICKET-OF-LEAVE
MAN" after all.

[*Tableau*]

THE END

CASTE

(1867)

By T. W. ROBERTSON

THOMAS WILLIAM ROBERTSON

(1829-1871)

to speak of the era of Tom Robertson as though some fateful thing had happened to the British drama with his advent. The stage pendulum had swung so far toward an imitation of heroic speech and attitude, the sentiment of stage poetry was so far away from the sentiment of real life, that it seemed as though the man who went to the theatre to stifle reality beneath an imagination which was alluerile and an invention which was thoroughly artificial. Such drama was, as I have said before, encouraged through the domination of the actor and his manager. To speak as we may of the innovations of Tom Robertson — these innovations would have had, at the very outset, small encouragement, had it not been for the close coöperation of Squire and Marie Bancroft, both of whom were so closely identified with the cream of Robertson's comedy writing.

"Caste", the logical selection for inclusion in the present volume, may not strike us with any of its former originality. It may be stilted, and yet it still has vitality. It is curious to note, in dramatic history, how a drama may lose its contemporaneousness, and yet remain an effective piece for the theatre. Only in 1918, Miss Ethel Barrymore produced a garbled version of "Camille." She has been content to remain true to the Matilda Heron transcription, and had she applied to it her theory of dressing *Camille* according to her period, she would have met with great success. I agree with Archer that "the day is fast approaching when 'Caste' will have to be played in the costumes of the '60's." It will be interesting to see whether ceasing to regard this comedy's manners and sentiments as contemporaneous will obliterate it altogether from stage history.

Robertson was born of a theatrical family. His father, William Robertson, was an actor of the old school, and a manager; so, likewise, was his great-grandfather. He was born on January 9, 1829, at Newark-on-Trent, and his sister, Madge, who afterwards became Mrs. Kendall, sustained the family tradition. The early youth of Tom Robertson, outside of school, was spent in the theatre. He was only five years old when he began playing juvenile parts, and intermittently he pursued his studies at the Nottingham Academy and elsewhere, becoming noted thus early for his superlative wit.

In 1843, his father assumed the management of the Lincoln Company, and he took his son into service as a scene painter, a prompter, a writer of songs, and an actor in many plays, including one by Dickens. If the full story were told of his years, it would be a most interesting record of the provincial English touring theatre, into which Robertson threw himself with energy, acting any part from Hamlet to the *Ghost*, and changing quickly from *Surface* to *Doctor Pangloss*. The declining fortunes of the Robertson family were due probably to the influence of the circuit system. And, in 1848, Robertson went to London,

a significant move for one without money, but with a great diffuseness and want of talent. For some time, he tutored at Utrecht, having become proficient in French, but the mere pittance he made scarcely kept him from starving. It was in 1851 that, at the Olympic Theatre, Robertson's first play, "A Night's Adventure," was produced by William Farren, and we are told that this old actor in gross outspokenness declared that it was "a damned bad play", to which the ever-ready Robertson replied, "Not so damned bad as the acting." The anecdote is not so significant as it is representative of the alertness of the Robertson repartee, an alertness which won for him many friends, and fitted him for his task as an associate on the contributing staff of *Fun*. Stamped as a wit, Robertson made friends with the wits of the time. In his acting experience, he soon became acquainted with Henry J. Byron, and played with him on several occasions. The two had many grim experiences with poverty, each pledging the other that if successful he would be true to the one on whom fortune failed to smile.

Farren, however, knew a good thing when he saw it. He bought another play from Robertson for three pounds, and the three-pound habit passed on to Charles Matthews and Madame Vestris, who employed Robertson as prompter of the Olympic when they took charge. The work that Robertson did was of the "pot-boiler" quality. As fast as he would write his little pieces, some of them original, others adaptations, he would sell them to Lacy, the publisher, for a nominal price. This work not being very profitable, he tried to enlist in the army. It was a little while before Robertson said afterwards, of irregular habits and loose salary, and might even have been a tragedy.

In 1856, he married Miss Elizabeth Burton, and the two went to Dublin, where she was a leading lady and eccentric comedian. It was on the death of a little daughter that Robertson definitely retired from the stage and began writing for the magazines, translating plays for Lacy.

But literature for him did not seem to flourish any more. We are told that at one time Robertson seriously thought of giving up writing and turning to book-keeping. Small income came from his theatrical criticisms in the *Illustrated Times*, edited by Henry Vizetelly, and in the *Comic News*, edited by H. J. Byron. His novel writing proved unsuccessful, though little did Robertson realize at the time that he wrote his story, "David Garrick", based on Mélesville's three-act play, "The Van", that this would be the beginning of his career. Here is a strange indication of the way in which dramas were evolved on the British stage in those days: a novel is shaped out of a French play, and a dramatization of that novel results in the script of "David Garrick", which Robertson sold to Lacy for ten pounds.

Some years after, E. A. Sothorn, the famous comedian, who had met with great success in *Dundreary*, was looking about for some drama to refute the belief of Thackeray and John Leech that it would be difficult for him to duplicate his success. A casual conversation with the actor brought the play of "Garrick" to the attention of Sothorn, and Sothorn gave Robertson the money to buy the rights back from Lacy, and went so far as to advance him fifty pounds royalties. It was produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham, April, 1864, and met with great success, though the critics scored Sothorn because they thought his voice not fitted for making Garrick. In after years, a dispute arose between Sothorn and Tom Robertson as to the originality of the piece, and they both claimed the writing of the dramatic scene, even as there was some dispute over individual touches in "Home

son comedy produced by Sothorn at the Haymarket, in 1869. "Home", was not an original play at the start, for it was taken from Augier's *Intérieur*. "David Garrick" afterwards became a steadfast addition to the repertoire of the actor, Sir Charles Wyndham.

A significant date in the career of Tom Robertson was November 11, 1865, at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, in London, the Bancrofts produced his play *Roman manners*, "Society." It established the fortunes of every one con-

sequent to get a glimpse of the Robertson of this time in a description preserved by Bancroft himself, who believed that the Robertson comedies saved the theatre and revived an intelligent interest in the drama, infusing a naturalness into stage work which did much to encourage a natural school of acting. This was of Robertson:

He was of a highly nervous temperament, and he had a great habit of biting his moustache and caressing his beard — indeed, his hands were rarely still. He was at that time thirty-six, above medium height, and rather stoutly built, with a pale skin, and reddish beard, and small, piercing, red-brown eyes which were ever restless.

Following his first success, came "Ours" (September 16, 1866), "Caste" (April 6, 1867), "Play" (February 15, 1868), "School" (January 14, 1869), and "M.P." (March 23, 1870).

Managers began to compete for his dramas, and he turned them out with a rapidity which was startling and dangerous to his permanence as a playwright. Critics as Lester Wallack, noted for their picturesque, often flamboyant, romances, became startled over the new régime of acting set in motion by Tom Robertson. He was noted for his thoroughness of preparation. W. S. Gilbert, whose acquaintance with him began as early as 1869, at a dinner given to the literary staff, once declared:

He frequently attended his rehearsals and learnt a great deal from his method of stage-management, which in those days was quite a novelty, although most plays are now stage-managed on the principles he introduced. I look upon stage-management, as now understood, as having been absolutely "invented" by him.

For the acting upheld and well founded by the Bancrofts, who encouraged the work of John Hare, we have the confession of Wallack that, however much himself might have considered Sheridan's mode of characterization to be the greatest difficulty was in studying the extreme modern school of writing. And he went further:

In speaking Tom Robertson's lines, for instance, one is talking "everybody's talk." It looks very easy, but it is most difficult, for if you are illustrating Shakespeare or Shakespeare, you are speaking in a language that is new to you; and on that account impresses you all the more; whereas, if you have a line from Tom Robertson or Boucicault, you can give it just as well in two or three different ways.

One can gain a clear idea of the freshness of the Robertson comedy, as pressed itself upon the London theatre-going public, by reading the criticisms of the time. Exclamations arose on all sides at what one critic designated as the simplicity of scene and the "accumulation of incidents and satire more interesting and more poignant than might be found in all the sensational dramas of the half century."

Another significant thing to the critics of the period regarding Robertson was that, whereas it had become a popular fetish that the English were only interested in French adaptations, and whereas the managers had raised an almost insuperable barrier against originality — a barrier which poor Boucicault found difficult to surmount, and which afforded the theatre an opportunity of securing a miscellaneous assortment of plays for the mere hack price of translation — here appeared a dramatist who suddenly raised the value of the home product, and raised himself above the degraded position of mere literary and theatrical carpenter. Robertson was naïve about his sudden success and his long-awaited release from poverty. He is reported to have said, speaking of his actor experiences:

Those were the days when I had one meal a day and three parts a night to play — now I have three meals a day and no part to play, and for this reason Providence has my most heartfelt thanks.

If one compares the stage directions of the period of James Sheridan Knowles with the stage directions of the Shavian drama, one will find a wider difference in intent and purpose, the latter being so nearly in accord with the realistic method of the realist's summing up of psychology and motive. Robertson laid the foundation for the modern school of stage direction. He put a stop to the spontaneous horseplay and "gags" of the earlier actor, who introduced dialogue at will into a play, as the actor moved him.

William Archer, after raising such interesting questions as "Did Robertson inaugurate the modern English drama?" "Is he the intellectual ancestor of Mr. Ibsen and Mr. Oscar Wilde?" "Is the 'Second Mrs. Tanqueray' implicit in 'Casanova'?" "Did the Robertson impetus die away in Mr. Byron and Mr. Godfrey, while Mr. Pinero, Mr. Wilde and Mr. Jones are the products of a still newer movement?" "Is Mr. Carton, perhaps, the one survivor of 'The tribe of Tom'?" goes on to say:

I am inclined to regard Robertson as a man with a curious instinct of superficial modernity, of which his intimate knowledge of stage-effect enabled him to make the most, but without the psychological penetration, the philosophical culture, or the artistic seriousness necessary for the great dramatist. He has been called the Thackeray of the stage, — I should rather call him the Lee of the stage, inasmuch as his criticism of life is that of the family caricaturist rather than of the philosophic satirist.

We take this estimate as a fair approach, in these more modern days, of the value of Robertson. His value is to be found, not so much in comparison with the work which followed him, as in contrast with the work which preceded him. And if the latter estimate is taken, one cannot deny his significance as a milepost in the development of the Victorian drama.

A full list of his plays would scarcely add more to the impression of Tom Robertson. His comedies were filled with satire, with a certain tenderness, a certain

characters and the dialogue. . . . He wanted nothing better than to be realist and to reproduce what he had actually seen. He knew nothing of great ladies, as one may well understand. When he had to portray them he was obliged to copy from bad models. His *Lady Ptarmigan* is a regular bourgeois; his *Marquise de Saint Maur*, who learns bits of Froissart by heart, and gives lessons in history to her son, is either a myth or an anachronism. His *Hawthorne*, on the other hand, is as real as can be; Robertson had met him probably in the clubs which he frequented.

In the study of "Caste", one will, as Mr. Archer says, note how contemporaneity seizes hold of a dramatist and stamps itself upon the dialogue. There are definite references to the Indian Mutiny and to the ballet at Covent Garden. Apart from this, as Mr. Archer confesses:

It is curious to remember that "Caste" (produced in 1867) is now (1900) just as old as "Money" and "London Assurance" were when "Caste" was new. Yet the distance that separates them from "Caste" in tone and diction appears infinitely greater than the distance between "Caste" and "Liberator's Hall", which is very slight indeed.

One can imagine the sensation which was created among the Bancroft company when Tom Robertson brought his script of "Caste", and read the play to them. Little did they think upon what a triumphant career they were launching the play, which has held the stage ever since that time, being revived, again and again, in notable casts. The part of *Eccles*, known to a later generation through the distinctive characterization work done by Sir John Hare, is one which calls for special character-acting — a type of character-acting which is now dying out. As a critic remarked, after a later revival of "Caste", if the play was coldly received was not due to loss of freshness on the part of Robertson, but rather to a sad appreciation in the acting which had originally brought it to success.

In the evolutionary career of Bernard Shaw, "Caste" has played its part. He confesses, in his "Dramatic Opinions and Essays", that the Robertsonian movement caught him as a boy, the Ibsen movement caught him as a man, and whatever next movement there is to be will catch him as a fossil. There is no usual Shavian wit when he gets down to real criticism. We find him excellent at discriminating, and resentful of Robertson's view of the working classes in *Eccles* and *Gerridge*, which he claimed to be worthy of the untrustworthiness of Dickens. But, despite his irritation, Shaw is fair enough to call attention to the fact that *Eccles* and *Gerridge* were something in the mid-century Victorian days, when there was a shabby-genteel ignorance of the working classes.

He writes:

Let it not be forgotten that in both [*Eccles* and *Gerridge*] there really is a humanization, as humanization was understood in the '60's: that is a discovery of saving sympathetic qualities in personages hitherto deemed beyond redemption. Even theology had to be humanized then by the rejection of the old doctrine of eternal punishment.

This fair recognition on the part of Shaw must be the same recognition given by the modern reader who studies the play.

In America, the piece was pirated in its original production by W. J. Florence.

ge history of "Caste" is epitomized in W. Davenport Adams's "Dictionary Drama."

Study of Robertson involves a study of the period in which he lived. It takes consideration of the humourists who have been discussed elsewhere in this ; it records the beginnings of a brilliant history of acting ; it is involved in the history of several players whose reputations are now a part of the history of the stage. Tom Robertson was brought in contact with fixed ideas in play-acting with stage management as represented by the gruff, overbearing Buckstone. He died, on February 3, 1871, he had helped to change the conditions which had handicapped him. Little did Buckstone think, when he wrote "Rubbish" the fly-leaf of the manuscript copy of "Society", that it would be preserved in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford. It was "rubbish" to him, not because of its dramaturgy, but because it upset the conventional notions of the Haymarket Theatre which he managed. We must take Tom Robertson as a forerunner of Shaw and Jones. While we can understand W. B. Yeats's remark that such plays "require little awakening knowledge for their consumption, yet, when they were first given, it not only brought to the Victorian audience a certain new human point of view, but it likewise brought to the English stage a new realistic note which took the drama out of the vacuous atmosphere of its unreality.

CASTE

By T. W. ROBERTSON

TO
MISS MARIE WILTON
(MRS. BANCROFT)

THIS COMEDY IS DEDICATED
BY
HER GRATEFUL FRIEND
AND
FELLOW LABOURER
THE AUTHOR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<i>Prince of Wales's Theatre, London, April 6, 1867</i>	<i>Broadway Theatre, New York, August 1867</i>
HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	Mr. Frederick Younge	Mr. W. J. Florence
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	Mr. Bancroft	Mr. Owen Marlow
ECCLES	Mr. George Honey	Mr. Wm. Davidge
SAM GERRIDGE	Mr. Hare	Mr. Edward Lamb
DIXON	—————	—————
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	Miss Larkin	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert
ESTHER ECCLES	Miss Marie Wilton	Mrs. S. F. Chanfrau
POLLY ECCLES	Miss Lydia Foote	Mrs. W. J. Florence
ACT I. The Little House at Stangate		COURTSHIP
ACT II. The Lodgings in Mayfair		MATRIMONY
ACT III. The Little House in Stangate		WIDOWHOOD

A lapse of eight months occurs between the first and the second Act, and a lapse of twelve months between the second and the third.

CASTE

ACT I

FIRST. — *A plain set chamber, never soiled. A window, with practicable blind; street backing and no railings. Door practicable, when opened showing street door (practicable). Fireplace; two-hinged stoves on each side of mantel-piece. Sideboard cupboard, cupboard in recess; tea-things, tea-pot, tea-caddy, tea-tray, etc., on it. Long table, before fire; old piece of carpet laid down; plain chairs; book-shelf, back; a small table under it with ballet-shoe and skirt on it; a rack of benefit bills hanging under book-shelf. Theatrical printed portraits, framed, hanging about; chimneypiece clock; box of lucifers and ornaments on mantel-shelf; kettle on hob, and fire laid; door-mats on outside of door. Bureau in lower right-hand corner. Rapping heard at door, the handle is then shaken as when rain rises. The door is unlocked.*

Enter GEORGE D'ALROY.

GEORGE D'ALROY. Told you so; the key's left under the mat in case I forget. They're not back from rehearsal. Put up hat on peg near door as HAWTREES! Confound rehearsal!

[Crosses to fireplace]
HAWTREE *[back to audience, looking at fire]* And this is the fairy's bower! Yes; and this is the fairy's bower; the fire is laid. I'll light it. *Lights fire with lucifer from mantel-piece*

HAWTREE *[turning to GEORGE]*. And the abode rendered blessed by the fire. It is here that she dwells, talks, — eats and drinks. Does she eat and drink?

GEORGE. Yes, heartily. I've seen

HAWTREE. And you are really in a case of true love — hit —

GEORGE. Right through. Can't live away from her.

[With elbow on end of mantel-piece, down stage]

HAWTREE. Poor old Dal! and you've brought me over the water to —

GEORGE. Stangate.

HAWTREE. Stangate — to see her for the same sort of reason that when a patient is in a dangerous state one doctor calls in another — for a consultation.

GEORGE. Yes. Then the patient dies.

HAWTREE. Tell us about it — you know I've been away.

[Sits at table, leg on chair.]

GEORGE. Well then, eighteen months ago —

HAWTREE. Oh cut that! you told me all about that. You went to a theatre, and saw a girl in a ballet, and you fell in love.

GEORGE. Yes. I found out that she was an amiable, good girl.

HAWTREE. Of course; cut that. We'll credit her with all the virtues and accomplishments.

GEORGE. Who worked hard to support a drunken father.

HAWTREE. Oh! the father's a drunkard, is he? The father does not inherit the daughter's virtues?

GEORGE. No. I hate him.

HAWTREE. Naturally. Quite so! Quite so!

GEORGE. And she — that is, Esther — is very good to her younger sister.

HAWTREE. Younger sister also angelic, amiable, accomplished, etc.

GEORGE. Um — good enough, but got a temper — large temper. Well, with some difficulty, I got to speak to her. I mean to Esther. Then I was allowed to see her to her door here.

HAWTREE. I know — pastry-cooks — Richmond dinner — and all that.

GEORGE. You're too fast. Pastry-cooks — yes. Richmond — no. Your

knowledge of the world, fifty yards round barracks, misleads you. I saw her nearly every day, and I kept on falling in love—falling and falling, until I thought I should never reach the bottom; then I met you.

HAWTREE. I remember the night when you told me; but I thought it was only an amourette. However, if the fire is a conflagration, subdue it; try dissipation.

GEORGE. I have.

HAWTREE. What success?

GEORGE. None; dissipation brought me bad health and self-contempt, a sick head and a sore heart.

HAWTREE. Foreign travel; absence makes the heart grow *[slight pause]*—stronger. Get leave and cut away.

GEORGE. I did get leave, and I did cut away; and while away I was miserable and a gon-er coon than ever.

HAWTREE. What's to be done?

[Sits cross-legged on chair, facing GEORGE]

GEORGE. Don't know. That's the reason I asked you to come over and see.

HAWTREE. Of course, Dal, you're not such a soft as to think of marriage. You know what your mother is. Either you are going to behave properly, with a proper regard for the world, and all that, you know; or you're going to do the other thing. Now, the question is, what do you mean to do? The girl is a nice girl, no doubt; but as to your making her Mrs. D'Alroy, the thing is out of the question.

GEORGE. Why? What should prevent me?

HAWTREE. Caste!—the inexorable law of caste. The social law, so becoming and so good, that commands like to mate with like, and forbids a giraffe to fall in love with a squirrel.

GEORGE. But my dear Bark—

HAWTREE. My dear Dal, all those marriages of people with common people are all very well in novels and plays on the stage, because the real people don't exist, and have no relatives who exist, and no connections, and so no harm's done, and it's rather interesting to look at; but in real life with real relations, and real mothers and so forth, it's absolute bosh; it's worse, it's utter social and personal annihilation and damnation.

GEORGE. As to my mother, I haven't thought about her.

[Sits corner of table]

HAWTREE. Of course not. Love are so damned selfish; they never think of anybody but themselves.

GEORGE. My father died when I was three years old, and she married again before I was six, and married a Frenchman.

HAWTREE. A nobleman of the most ancient families of France, of equal blood to her own. She obeyed the duties imposed on her by her station and by caste.

GEORGE. Still, it caused a separation and a division between us, and I never see my brother, because he lives abroad. Of course the Marquise de St. Maur married my mother, and I look upon her with a sort of superstitious awe.

[Moves chair with which he has been twisting about during speech from table to left corner.]

HAWTREE. She's a grand Brahmin priestess.

GEORGE. Just so; and I know I am a fool. Now you're clever, Bark, a little too clever, I think. You're paying your devoirs—that's the correct word, isn't it—to Lady Florentine Carberry, the daughter of a count? She's above you—you've no title—she to forget her caste?

HAWTREE. That argument does not apply. A man can be no more than a gentleman.

GEORGE.

“True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

HAWTREE. Now, George, if you are going to consider this question from the point of view of poetry, you're off to No-Man's Land, where I won't follow you.

GEORGE. No gentleman can be ashamed of the woman he loves. It matters what her original station, or what his wife he raises her to his rank.

HAWTREE. Yes, he raises her; but her connections—her relatives. How about them?

[ECCLES enters]

ECCLES *[Outside]*. Polly! Polly! *[Enters]* Why the devil—

[GEORGE crosses to HAWTREE, who rises. ECCLES sees him and assumes a deferential manner.]

ECCLES. Oh, Mr. De-Alroy! I didn't see you, sir. Good afternoon to the same to you, sir, and many on 'em.

Puts hat on bureau and comes down]

FREE. Who is this?

GE. This is papa.

FREE. Ah!

Turns up to book-shelf, scanning ECCLES through eye-glass]

GE. Miss Eccles and her sister returned from rehearsal yet?

ES. No, sir, they have not. I see them in directly. I hope you've waited well since I seen you last,

GE. Quite, thank you; and how have you been, Mr. Eccles?

ES. Well, sir, I have not been going at all. My 'elth, sir, and my money both broke. I'm not the man to go to be. I am not accustomed to the sort of thing. I've seen better times but they are gone — most like that. It is a melancholy thing, to see a man of my time of life to look for better days that are gone most forever.

GE. I daresay.

ES. Once proud and prosperous, now poor and lowly. Once master of a fortune, now I am now, by the pressure of circumstances over which I have no control, driven to seek work and not to rest. Poverty is a dreadful thing, to see a man as has once been well off.

GE. I daresay.

ES [*sighing*]. Ah, sir, the poor man's life is often 'ardly used. What has the working-man?

FREE. None when he don't

ES. We are all equal in mind and standing.

GE. [*Aside*] I hope not.

ES. I am sorry, gentlemen, but I cannot offer you any refreshment — but luxury and me has long rangings.

GE. I am very sorry for your troubles, Mr. Eccles. [*Looking at HAWTREE, who turns away*] I hope that you will allow me to have this trifling loan?

[*Giving him half a sovereign*]

ES. Sir, you're a gentleman. I can tell a real gentleman with half an eye — I mean half an eye — a real man understands the natural laws of the working-man. Pride, and a thing as should be put down as strong 'and of pecuniary necessities. There's a friend of mine round here as I promised to meet on a

little matter of business; so if you will excuse me, sir —

GEORGE. With pleasure.

ECCLES [*going up*]. Sorry to leave you, gentlemen, but —

GEORGE. Don't stay on my account.

HAWTREE. Don't mention it.

ECCLES. Business is business. [*Goes up*] The girls will be in directly. Good afternoon, gentlemen, — good afternoon — [*Going out*] Good afternoon. [*Exit*]

[*GEORGE sits in chair, corner of table, right*]

HAWTREE [*coming down left of table*]. Papa is not nice, but —

[*Sitting on corner of table down stage*]

“True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

Poor George! I wonder what your mamma — the Most Noble the Marquise de St. Maur — would think of Papa Eccles. Come, Dal, allow that there *is* something in caste. Conceive that dirty ruffian — that rinsing of stale beer — that walking tap-room, for a father-in-law. Take a spin to Central America. Forget her.

GEORGE. Can't.

HAWTREE. You'll be wretched and miserable with her.

GEORGE. I'd rather be wretched with her than miserable without her. [*HAWTREE takes out cigar case*] Don't smoke here!

HAWTREE. Why not?

GEORGE. She'll be coming in directly.

HAWTREE. I don't think she'd mind.

GEORGE. I should. Do you smoke before Lady Florence Carberry?

HAWTREE [*closing case*]. Ha! You're suffering from a fit of the morals.

GEORGE. What's that?

HAWTREE. The morals is a disease, like the measles, that attacks the young and innocent.

GEORGE [*with temper*]. You talk like Mephistopheles, without the cleverness.

[*Goes up the window and looks at watch*]

HAWTREE [*arranging cravat at glass*]. I don't pretend to be a particularly good sort of fellow, nor a particularly bad sort of fellow. I suppose I'm about the average standard sort of thing, and I don't like to see a friend go down hill to the devil while I can put the drag on. [*Turning, with back to fire*] Here is a girl of very humble station — poor, and all that, with a drunken father, who

sea-time. Now, Corporal, you sit on me.

TREE. As the pages did of old.

Y. "My lady."

TREE. "My lady."

Y. Here's the kettle, Corporal.

Holding out kettle at arm's length.

HAWTREE looks at it through eye-glass]

TREE. Very nice kettle.

Y. Take it into the back kitchen.

TREE. Eh!

Y. Oh, I'm coming too.

TREE. Ah! that alters the case.

He takes out handkerchief and

then takes hold of kettle—

crosses as GEORGE rises and

comes down, slapping HAWTREE

on back. HAWTREE immedi-

ately places kettle on the floor.

POLLY throws herself into chair

by fireside up stage, and roars

with laughter. GEORGE and

ESTHER laugh]

GEORGE. What are you about?

TREE. I'm about to fill the

cup [going to POLLY]. Mind what

you're doing, Polly. What will Sam

choose?

Y. Whatever Sam chooses.

the sweetheart can't see the

end can't grieve at. Now then—

all!

TREE. "My lady!"

[Takes up kettle]

Y. Attention! Forward! March!

and the soot don't drop upon your

s.

[Exeunt POLLY and HAWTREE,

HAWTREE first]

TREE. What a girl it is—all

The worst is that it is so easy

to make her!

GEORGE. And so easy to find out

a mistake. *[They cross down stage,*

and first] But why won't you let

me see you with a piano?

[Following ESTHER]

TREE. I don't want one.

GEORGE. You said you were fond

of it.

TREE. We may be fond of many

things without having them. *[Leaning*

end of table. Taking out letter]

There is a gentleman says he is

kind to me.

GEORGE [jealous]. May I know his

name?

TREE. What for? It would be

as his solicitations—

[Throws letter into fire]

GEORGE. I lit that fire.

ESTHER. Then burn these, too.

[GEORGE crosses to fire] No, not that.

[Taking one back] I must keep that;

burn the others.

[GEORGE throws letters on fire,

crosses back of table quickly—

takes hat from peg and goes to

door as if leaving hurriedly.

ESTHER takes chair from table

and goes to centre of stage with

it, noticing GEORGE's manner.

GEORGE hesitates at door. Shuts

it quickly, hangs his hat up

again, and comes down to back

of chair in which ESTHER has

seated herself]

GEORGE. Who is that from?

ESTHER. Why do you wish to know?

GEORGE. Because I love you, and I

don't think you love me, and I fear a

rival.

ESTHER. You have none.

GEORGE. I know you have so many

admirers.

ESTHER. They're nothing to me.

GEORGE. Not one?

ESTHER. No. They're admirers,

but there's not a husband among

them.

GEORGE. Not the writer of that

letter?

ESTHER [coquettishly]. Oh, I like him

very much.

GEORGE [sighing]. Ah!

ESTHER. And I'm very fond of this

letter.

GEORGE. Then, Esther, you don't

care for me.

ESTHER. Don't I? How do you

know?

GEORGE. Because you won't let me

read that letter.

ESTHER. It won't please you if you

see it.

GEORGE. I daresay not. That's

just the reason that I want to. You

won't?

ESTHER [hesitates]. I will. There!

[Giving it to him]

GEORGE [reads]. "Dear Madam."

ESTHER. That's tender, isn't it?

GEORGE. "The terms are four

pounds—your dresses to be found.

For eight weeks certain, and longer if

you should suit. *[In astonishment]* I

cannot close the engagement until the

return of my partner. I expect him

back to-day, and I will write you as

soon as I have seen him. Yours very,"

etc. Four pounds — find dresses. What does this mean?

ESTHER. It means that they want a Columbine for the Pantomime at Manchester, and I think I shall get the engagement.

GEORGE. Manchester; then you'll leave London?

ESTHER. I must. [*Pathetically*] You see this little house is on my shoulders. Polly only earns eighteen shillings a week, and father has been out of work a long, long time. I make the bread here, and it's hard to make sometimes. I've been mistress of this place, and forced to think ever since my mother died, and I was eight years old. Four pounds a week is a large sum, and I can save out of it.

[*This speech is not to be spoken in a tone implying hardship*]

GEORGE. But you'll go away, and I sha'n't see you.

ESTHER. P'raps it will be for the best. [*Rises and crosses*] What future is there for us? You're a man of rank, and I am a poor girl who gets her living by dancing. It would have been better that we had never met.

GEORGE. No.

ESTHER. Yes, it would, for I'm afraid that —

GEORGE. You love me?

ESTHER. I don't know. I'm not sure; but I think I do.

[*Stops and turns half-face to GEORGE*]

GEORGE [*trying to seize her hand*]. Esther!

ESTHER. No. Think of the difference of our stations.

GEORGE. That's what Hawtree says! Castle! castle! curse castle! [*Goes up*]

ESTHER. If I go to Manchester it will be for the best. We must both try to forget each other.

GEORGE [*comes down by table*]. Forget you! no, Esther; let me —

[*Seizing her hand*]

POLLY. [*Without*] Mind what you're about. Oh dear! oh dear!

[*GEORGE and ESTHER sit in window seat*]

[*Enter POLLY and HAWTREE*]

POLLY. You nasty, great clumsy Corporal, you've spilt the water all over my frock. Oh dear! [*Coming down*. HAWTREE *puts kettle on ham on table*] Take it off the ham! [*HAWTREE then places it on the mantel-piece*] No, no!

put it in the fireplace. [*HAWTREE so*] You've spoilt my frock. [*Sit*]

HAWTREE. Allow me to offer you a new one. [*Crosses*]

POLLY. No, I won't. You'll be sorry to see how it looks when it's washed. Haven't you got a handkerchief?

HAWTREE. Yes.

POLLY. Then wipe it dry.

[*HAWTREE bends almost on knees, and wipes dress*. HAWTREE *whistling*. Throws into HAWTREE's hat on drain

SAM [*sulkily*]. Arternoon — didn't hear me knock! — the door open. I'm afraid I intrude.

POLLY. No, you don't. We're to see you if you've got a handkerchief. Help to wipe this dry.

[*SAM pulls out handkerchief, wipes slop, and dropping on one knee, snatches skirt of dress*. HAWTREE, who looks up surprised]

HAWTREE. I'm very sorry. [*Rises*] I beg your pardon.

[*Business*; SAM *stares HAWTREE out*]

POLLY. It won't spoil it.

SAM. The stain won't come out. [*Rises*]

POLLY. It's only water.

SAM. [*To ESTHER*] Arternoon, Eccles. [*To GEORGE*] Arternoon, [*POLLY rises. To POLLY*] Who's other swell?

POLLY. I'll introduce you. Cap Hawtree — Mr. Samuel Gerridge.

HAWTREE. Charmed, I'm charmed. [*Staring at SAM through eye-glass. SAM acknowledges HAWTREE's recognition with a "chuck" of the head over left shoulder, going up to GEORGE*] Who's this?

GEORGE. Polly's sweetheart.

HAWTREE. Oh! Now if I can be of no further assistance, I'll go.

[*Comes over back down to drain*]

POLLY. Going, Corporal?

HAWTREE. Yaas! [*Business*; takes up hat and stick from bureau behind SAM's cap. He picks it out carefully and coming down stage examines it with curiosity, drops it on the floor and picks it away with his stick, at the same time moving backwards, causing him to bump against SAM, who turns round saving him. I beg your pardon. [*Crossing up stage*] George, will you — [*GEORGE takes notice*] Will you —?

GEORGE. What!

HAWTREE. Go with me?

GEORGE. Go? No!
HAWTREE *[coming down to POLLY]*.
Miss Eccles—I mean “my

[Shaking hands and going; as he backs away bumps against SAM, and business repeated, HAWTREE close to door keeping his eye on SAM, who has shown signs of anger]

POLLY. Good-bye, Corporal!
HAWTREE. *[At door]* Good-bye! Good
noon, Mr.—Mr.—er—Pardon

[with constrained rage]. Gerridge,
Gerridge.

HAWTREE *[as if remembering name]*.
Gerridge. Good-day. *[Exit]*
[turning to POLLY in awful rage].
Is that fool? Who’s that long

POLLY. I told you; Captain Haw-

tree. What’s ‘e want ‘ere?

POLLY. He’s a friend of Mr. D’Al-

ton. Ugh! Isn’t one of ‘em enough!

POLLY. What do you mean?

POLLY. For the neighbours to talk
about. Who’s he after?

POLLY. What do you mean by after?
I’m forgetting myself, I think.

POLLY. No, I’m not forgetting myself
I’m remembering you. What can a
fool of a swell dressed up to the
within an inch of his life want
two girls of your class? Look
at the difference of your stations! ‘E
come ‘ere after any good.

*[During the speech, ESTHER crosses
to fire and sits before it in a low
chair. GEORGE follows her and
sits on her left]*

POLLY. Samuel!

POLLY. I mean what I say. People
don’t stick to their own class. Life’s
a long journey, and Mankind’s a
longer—first class, second class,
third class. Any person found riding in
inferior class to that for which he has
paid his ticket will be removed at the
next station stopped at, according to the
laws of the company.

POLLY. You’re giving yourself nice
travelling. What business is it of yours who
I’m here? Who are you?

POLLY. I’m a mechanic.

POLLY. That’s evident.

POLLY. I ain’t ashamed of it. I’m not
ashamed of my paper cap.

POLLY. Why should you be? I

daresay Captain Hawtree isn’t
ashamed of his fourteen-and-sixpenny
gossamer.

SAM. You think a deal of him ‘cos
he’s a captain. Why did he call you
“my lady”?

POLLY. Because he treated me as
one. I wish you’d make the same mis-
take.

SAM. Ugh!

[SAM goes angrily to bureau.

*POLLY bounces up stage, and
sits in window seat]*

ESTHER *[sitting with GEORGE, tête-à-
tête, by fire]*. But we must listen to
reason.

GEORGE. I hate reason!

ESTHER. I wonder what it means?

GEORGE. Everything disagreeable.
When people talk unpleasantly, they
always say listen to reason.

SAM *[turning round]*. What will the
neighbours say?

POLLY. I don’t care!

[Coming down]

SAM. What will the neighbours
think?

POLLY. They can’t think. They’re
like you, they’ve not been educated up
to it.

SAM. It all comes of your being on
the stage.

[Going to POLLY]

POLLY. It all comes of your not
understanding the stage or anything
else—but putty. Now, if you were a
gentleman—

SAM. Why then, of course, I should
make up to a lady.

POLLY. Ugh!

*[POLLY flings herself into chair
by table]*

GEORGE. Reason’s an idiot. Two
and two are four, and twelve are
fifteen, and eight are twenty. That’s
reason!

SAM *[turning to POLLY]*. Painting
your cheeks!

POLLY *[rising]*. Better paint our
cheeks than paint nasty old doors as you
do. How can you understand art?
You’re only a mechanic! You’re not a
professional! You’re in trade. You
are not of the same station as we are.
When the manager speaks to you, you
touch your hat, and say, “Yes, sir,”
because he’s your superior.

[Snaps fingers under SAM’s nose]

GEORGE. When people love there’s
no such thing as money—it don’t
exist.

ESTHER. Yes, it does.

GEORGE. Then it oughtn't to.

SAM. The manager employs me same as he does you. Payment is good anywhere and everywhere. Whatever's commercial, is right.

POLLY. Actors are not like mechanics. They wear cloth coats, and not fustian jackets.

SAM [*sneeringly in POLLY's face*]. I despise play actors.

POLLY. I despise mechanics.

[*POLLY slaps his face*]

GEORGE. I never think of anything else but you.

ESTHER. Really?

SAM [*goes to bureau, misses cap, looks around, sees it on floor, picks it up angrily, and comes to POLLY, who is sitting by the table*]. I won't stay here to be insulted.

[*Putting on cap*]

POLLY. Nobody wants you to stay. Go! Go! Go!

SAM. I will go. Good-bye, Miss Mary Eccles. [*Goes off and returns quickly*] I sha'n't come here again!

[*At door half-open*]

POLLY. Don't! Good riddance to bad rubbish.

SAM [*rushing down stage to POLLY*]. You can go to your captain!

POLLY. And you to your putty.

[*SAM throws his cap down and kicks it — then goes up stage and picks it up. POLLY turns and rises, leaning against table, facing him, crosses to door, and locks it.*

SAM, hearing click of lock, turns quickly]

ESTHER. And shall you always love me as you do now?

GEORGE. More.

POLLY. Now you sha'n't go. [*Locking door, taking out key, which she pockets, and placing her back against door*] Nyer! Now I'll just show you my power. Nyer!

SAM. Miss Mary Eccles, let me out!

[*Advancing to door*]

POLLY. Mr. Samuel Gerridge, I sha'n't!

[*SAM turns away*]

ESTHER. Now you two. [*Postman's knock*] The postman!

SAM. Now you must let me out. You must unlock the door.

POLLY. No, I needn't. [*Opens window, looking out*] Here — postman. [*Takes letter from postman at window*] Thank you. [*Business; flicks SAM in the face with letter*] For you, Esther!

ESTHER [*rising*]. For me?

POLLY. Yes.

[*Gives it to her, and closes window and returns to door triumphantly. SAM goes to window*]

ESTHER [*going down*]. From Manchester!

GEORGE. Manchester?

[*Coming down back of ESTHER*]

ESTHER [*reading*]. I've got the engagement — four pounds a week.

GEORGE [*placing his arm around her*]. You sha'n't go. Esther — stay — my wife!

ESTHER. But the world — world?

GEORGE. Hang the world! Stay with your husband. My world. Stay with your husband. Mrs. George D'Alroy.

[*During this POLLY has been coming up and down in front of door*]

SAM. I will go out.

[*Turning with sudden determination*]

POLLY. You can't, and you sha'n't!

SAM. I can — I will!

[*Opens window and jumps out*]

POLLY [*frightened*]. He's hurt himself. Sam — Sam, — dear Sam!

[*Running to window. SAM appears at window. POLLY covers his face and shuts window violently*]

Nyer!

[*During this GEORGE has been coming up*]
ESTHER]

GEORGE. My wife!

[*The handle of the door is heard to rattle, then the door is shut violently. ESTHER crosses to door; finding it locked, turns to POLLY sitting in window who gives her the key. ESTHER then opens the door. ESTHER reels in, very drunk, and clings to the corner of the bureau for support. GEORGE stands by, holding his moustache. ESTHER goes a little way up, looking at her father, at GEORGE. POLLY sitting in window recess*]

ACT DROP

For call. — GEORGE, hat in hand, bids ESTHER good-bye. ECCLES sits in chair, nodding before fire. POLLY again looks in at window. POLLY pulls the blind down violently.

ACT II

FIRST. — D'ALROY's lodgings in *anyfair*. A set chamber. Folding-doors opening on to drawing-room. Door on the right. Two windows, with muslin curtains. Loo-table. Sofa above piano. Two easy-chairs, each side of table. Dessert — ret in jug; two wine-glasses half full. Box of cigarettes, vase of flowers, embroidered slipper on can-opener, and small basket of coloured balls, all on table. Foot-stool by easy-chair. Ornamental gilt work-basket on stand in window. Easy-chair. Piano. Mahogany-stained table with oil-painting of D'ALROY in full dragoon regimentals. Davenport with vase of flowers on it; a chair each side; a water-colour drawing over it, and on each side of room. Half moonlight through window. ESTHER and GEORGE discovered. ESTHER at window. When curtain is risen she comes down slowly to her right of table, and GEORGE sitting in easy-chair left of table. GEORGE has his uniform trousers and boots on.

ESTHER. George, dear, you seem out of it.

GEORGE [smoking cigarette]. Not at all, not at all. [Rallying]

ESTHER. Then why don't you talk?

GEORGE. I've nothing to say.

ESTHER. That's no reason.

GEORGE. I can't talk about nothing.

ESTHER. Yes, you can; you often do.

GEORGE [round back of table and caressing her]. You used to do before we were married.

ESTHER. No, I didn't. I talked to you, and my love for you. D'ye see nothing?

GEORGE [sitting on stool left of GEORGE]. How long have we been married, dear? I can't see; six months yesterday. [Rallying] It hardly seems a week; it seems a dream.

ESTHER [putting his arm around her]. Why so jolly dream. Don't let us sleep. [Aside and recovering himself] Never shall I tell her?

ESTHER. And when I married you twenty-two, wasn't I?

GEORGE. Yes, dear; but then, you know, you must have been some age or

ESTHER. No; but to think I lived

two and twenty years without knowing you!

GEORGE. What of it, dear?

ESTHER. It seems such a dreadful waste of time.

GEORGE. So it was — awful.

ESTHER. Do you remember our first meeting? Then I was in the ballet.

GEORGE. Yes; now you're in the heavies.

ESTHER. Then I was in the front rank — now I am of high rank — the Honourable Mrs. George D'Alroy. You promoted me to be your wife.

GEORGE. No, dear, you promoted me to be your husband.

ESTHER. And now I'm one of the aristocracy; ain't I?

GEORGE. Yes, dear; I suppose that we may consider ourselves —

ESTHER. Tell me, George; are you quite sure that you are proud of your poor little humble wife?

GEORGE. Proud of you! Proud as the winner of the Derby.

ESTHER. Wouldn't you have loved me better if I'd been a lady?

GEORGE. You are a lady — you're my wife.

ESTHER. What will your mamma say when she knows of our marriage? I quite tremble at the thought of meeting her.

GEORGE. So do I. Luckily she's in Rome.

ESTHER. Do you know, George, I should like to be married all over again.

GEORGE. Not to anybody else, I hope?

ESTHER. My darling!

GEORGE. But why over again? Why?

ESTHER. Our courtship was so beautiful. It was like in a novel from the library, only better. You, a fine, rich, high-born gentleman, coming to our humble little house to court poor me. Do you remember the ballet you first saw me in? That was at Covent Garden. "Jeanne la Folle; or, the Return of the Soldier." [Goes up to piano] Don't you remember the dance?

[Plays a quick movement]

GEORGE. Esther, how came you to learn to play the piano? Did you teach yourself?

ESTHER. Yes. [Turning on music-stool] So did Polly. We can only touch the notes to amuse ourselves.

GEORGE. How was it?

ESTHER. I've told you so often.

[Rises and sits on stool at GEORGE'S feet]

GEORGE. Tell me again. I'm like the children—I like to hear what I know already.

ESTHER. Well, then, mother died when I was quite young. I can only just remember her. Polly was an infant; so I had to be Polly's mother. Father—who is a very eccentric man [GEORGE sighs deeply—ESTHER notices it and goes on rapidly—all to be simultaneous in action] but a very good one when you know him—did not take much notice of us, and we got on as we could. We used to let the first floor, and a lodger took it—Herr Griffenhausen. He was a ballet master at the Opera. He took a fancy to me, and asked me if I should like to learn to dance, and I told him father couldn't afford to pay for my tuition; and he said that [imitation] he did not want payment, but that he would teach me for nothing, for he had taken a fancy to me, because I was like a little lady he had known long years ago in a far off land he came from. Then he got us an engagement at the theatre. That was how we first were in the ballet.

GEORGE [slapping his leg]. That fellow was a great brick; I should like to ask him to dinner. What became of him?

ESTHER. I don't know. He left England. [GEORGE fidgets and looks at watch] You are restless, George. What's the matter?

GEORGE. Nothing.

ESTHER. Are you going out?

GEORGE. Yes. [Looking at his boots and spurs] That's the reason I dined in—

ESTHER. To the barracks?

GEORGE. Yes.

ESTHER. On duty?

GEORGE [hesitatingly]. On duty. [Rising] And, of course, when a man is a soldier, he must go on duty when he's ordered, and where he's ordered—and—[Aside]—why did I ever enter the service? [Crosses]

ESTHER [rises, crosses to GEORGE—and twining her arm round him]. George, if you must go out to your club, go; don't mind leaving me. Somehow or other, George, these last few days everything seems to have changed with me—I don't know why. Sometimes my eyes fill with tears, for no reason, and sometimes I feel so happy, for no

reason. I don't mind being myself as I used to do. When a few minutes behind time I do to the window and watch for you turn irritable. Not that I love less—no, for I love you more often when you are away I do that I am by myself. [Drops head on his breast] I never feel

[Goes to piano and turns on music]

GEORGE [watching ESTHER]. angels women are! At least, that is. I forget all about the [Carriage-wheels heard off] If I'd I could have been so happy, I'd sold out when I married.

[Knock at street door]

ESTHER [standing at table]. Tell me, dear?

GEORGE [at first window]. Here is a hansom. He's come for me. I must tell her sooner or later. [At door] Come in, Hawtree.

[Enter HAWTREE, in regimental uniform]

HAWTREE. How do? Hope you are well, Mrs. D'Alooy? [Coming to GEORGE, are you coming to—]

GEORGE [coming down left of ESTHER]. No, I've dined—[gives significant look]—we dined early.

[ESTHER plays scraps of music on piano]

HAWTREE [sotto voce]. Have you told her?

GEORGE. No, I daren't.

HAWTREE. But you must.

GEORGE. You know what a coward I am. You do it for me.

HAWTREE. Not for worlds, I just had my own adieux to make.

GEORGE. Ah, yes,—to Fanny Carberry. How did she take it?

HAWTREE. Oh, [slight pause] well.

GEORGE [earnestly]. Did she?

HAWTREE. No.

GEORGE. Nor exhibit any emotion whatever?

HAWTREE. No, not particularly.

GEORGE [surprisedly]. Didn't she kiss her?

HAWTREE. No; Lady Clara was in the room.

GEORGE [wonderingly]. Didn't she squeeze your hand?

HAWTREE. No.

GEORGE [impressively]. Didn't she say anything?

HAWTREE. No, except that

to see me back again soon, and India was a bad climate.

GEORGE. Umph! It seems to have tragic parting [*serio-comically*] — as tragic as parting — your back

HAWTREE. Lady Florence is not fit of person to make a scene.

GEORGE. To be sure, she's not your I wish Esther would be as cool comfortable. [*After a pause*] No, — no, I don't. [*A rap at door*]

[*Enter DIXON*]

GEORGE [*goes up to DIXON*]. Oh, lay out my —

HAWTREE. I have laid them out, sir; thing is ready.

GEORGE [*going down to HAWTREE — pause — irresolutely*]. I must tell mustn't I?

HAWTREE. Better send for her sister. — You go for her in a cab.

GEORGE. Just so. I'll send him at Dixon!

[*Goes up and talks to DIXON*]

ESTHER [*rising and going to back of left of table*]. Do you want to talk with my husband? Shall we go to the dining-room?

HAWTREE. No, Mrs. D'Alroy. [*Going to table and placing cap on it*]

GEORGE. No, dear. At once, Dixon. — The cabman to drive like — [*exit*] — like a — cornet just joined.

ESTHER. [*To HAWTREE*] Are you to take him anywhere?

HAWTREE [*GEORGE comes down and HAWTREE quickly on the shoulder he can speak*]. No. [*Aside*] Yes India. [*Crossing to GEORGE*] — or now.

GEORGE. No, no. I'll wait till I get my uniform. [*Going up*]

[*Door opens and POLLY peeps in*] POLLY. How d'ye do, good people, — are you well?

[*POLLY gets back of table — kisses ESTHER*]

GEORGE. Eh? Didn't you meet me?

POLLY. Who?

GEORGE. Dixon — my man.

POLLY. No.

GEORGE. Confound it! — he'll have done for nothing. How d'ye do, — [*Shakes hands*]

POLLY. How d'ye do, George.

[*ESTHER takes POLLY's things and goes up stage with them. POLLY*

places parasol on table. ESTHER returns left of POLLY]

POLLY. Bless you, my turtles. [*Blessing them, ballet fashion*] George, kiss your mother. [*He kisses her*] That's what I call an honourable brother-in-law's kiss. I'm not in the way, am I?

GEORGE [*behind easy-chair right of table*]. Not at all. I'm very glad you've come.

[*ESTHER shows POLLY the new music. POLLY sits at piano and plays comic tune*]

HAWTREE [*back to audience, and elbow on easy-chair, aside to GEORGE*]. Under ordinary circumstances she's not a very eligible visitor.

GEORGE. Caste again. [*Going up*] I'll be back directly. [*Exit GEORGE*]

HAWTREE [*looking at watch and crossing*]. Mrs. D'Alroy, I —

ESTHER [*who is standing over POLLY at piano*]. Going?

POLLY [*rising*]. Do I drive you away, Captain?

[*Taking her parasol from table.*

ESTHER gets to back of chair left of table]

HAWTREE. No.

POLLY. Yes, I do. I frighten you, I'm so ugly. I know I do. You frighten me.

HAWTREE. How so?

POLLY. You're so handsome. [*Coming down*] Particularly in those clothes, for all the world like an inspector of police.

ESTHER. [*Half aside*] Polly!

POLLY. I will! I like to take him down a bit.

HAWTREE. [*Aside*] This is rather a wild sort of thing in sisters-in-law.

POLLY. Any news, Captain?

HAWTREE [*in a drawling tone*]. No. Is there any news with you?

POLLY [*imitating him*]. Yaas; we've got a new piece coming out at our theatre.

HAWTREE [*interested*]. What's it about?

POLLY [*drawling*]. I don't know. [*To ESTHER*] Had him there! [*HAWTREE drops his sword from his arm; POLLY turns round quickly, hearing the noise, and pretends to be frightened*] Going to kill anybody to-day, that you've got your sword on?

HAWTREE. No.

POLLY. I thought not.

[*Sings*] "With a sabre on his brow,
And a helmet by his side,

The soldier sweethearts servant-
maids,
And eats cold meat besides."

[Laughs and walks about waving
her parasol]

[Enter GEORGE in uniform, carrying in
his hand his sword, sword-belt, and
cap. ESTHER takes them from him,
and places them on sofa, then comes
half down. GEORGE goes down by
HAWTREE]

POLLY [clapping her hands]. Oh!
here's a beautiful brother-in-law! Why
didn't you come in on horseback as they
do at Astley's? — gallop in and say
[Imitating soldier on horseback and pranc-
ing up and down stage during the piece],
Soldiers of France! the eyes of Europe
are a-looking at you! The Empire has
confidence in you, and France expects
that every man this day will do his —
little utmost! The foe is before you —
more's the pity — and you are before
them — worse luck for you! Forward!
Go and get killed; and to those who
escape the Emperor will give a little
bit of ribbon! Nineteens, about!
Forward! Gallop! Charge!

[Galloping to right, imitating bugle,
and giving point with parasol.
She nearly spears HAWTREE'S
nose. HAWTREE claps his hand
upon his sword-hilt. She throws
herself into chair, laughing, and
clapping HAWTREE'S cap (from
table) upon her head. All laugh
and applaud. Carriage-wheels
heard without]

POLLY. Oh, what a funny little cap,
it's got no peak. [A peal of knocks heard
at street door] What's that?

GEORGE [who has hastened to window].
A carriage! Good heavens — my
mother!

HAWTREE. [At window] The Mar-
chioness!

ESTHER [crossing to GEORGE]. Oh,
George!

POLLY [crossing to window]. A Mar-
chioness! A real, live Marchioness!
Let me look! I never saw a real live
Marchioness in all my life.

GEORGE [forcing her from window].
No, no, no! She doesn't know I'm
married. I must break it to her by
degrees. What shall I do?

[By this time HAWTREE is at door
right. ESTHER at door left]

ESTHER. Let me go into the bed-
room until —

HAWTREE. Too late! She's on
stairs.

ESTHER. Here, then!

[At centre doors, opens]

POLLY. I want to see a real
March —

[GEORGE lifts her in his arm
places her within folding-
with ESTHER — then she
doors quickly, turns and
HAWTREE, who, gatherin
his sword, faces GEORGE.
then exchange places mu
the fashion of soldiers "m
ing guard." As GEORGE
door and admits MARCHIO
HAWTREE drops down to l

GEORGE [with great ceremony].
dear mother, I saw you getting o
the carriage.

MARCHIONESS. My dear boy. [G
ing his forehead] I'm so glad I g
London before you embarked. [GE
nervous. HAWTREE coming down]
tain Hawtree, I think. How do you

HAWTREE [coming forward a l
Quite well, I thank your ladyshi
trust you are —

MARCHIONESS [sitting in easy-c
Oh, quite, thanks. [Slight pause]
you still see the Countess and
Florence?

[Looking at him through
glasses]

HAWTREE. Yes.

MARCHIONESS. Please remembe
to them — [HAWTREE takes cap
table, and places sword under his
Are you going?

HAWTREE. Yaas — Comp
[Bows, crossing round back of
To GEORGE who meets him] I'll
the door for you at seven. We
be at barracks by the quarter. [GE
crosses back of table] Poor devil!
comes of a man marrying beneath

[Exit HAWTREE. GEORGE c
down left of table]

MARCHIONESS. I'm not sorry
he's gone, for I wanted to talk to
alone. Strange that a woman of
good birth as the Countess should
courage the attention of Captain l
tree for her daughter Florence.
ing these lines D'ALROY conceals Po
hat and umbrella under table]
Clardonax was one of the old Carb
of Hampshire — not the Norfolk
berrys, but the direct line. And
Hawtree's grandfather was in tra
something in the City — soap, I t

George! [*Points to stool.* GEORGE *it to her. She motions that he is at her feet.* GEORGE *does so with*] He's a very nice person, but you, as one may see by his languor and swagger. My boy [*kissing his hair*], I am sure, will never make a lance. He is a D'Alroy, and by another's side Planta-genista. The life of our life stream is royal. GEORGE. How is the Marquis?

MARCHIONESS. Paralysed. I left the Spa with three physicians. He says paralysed at this time of the year it is in the family. The paralysis is personal, but hereditary. I came to see my steward; got to town to-night.

GEORGE. How did you find me out?

MARCHIONESS. I sent the footman to the barracks, and he saw your man in the street, and Dixon gave me his address. It's so long since I've seen you. [*Leans back in chair*] You're getting very well, and I daresay when we meet we are quite a "beau cavalier." Oh, my boy [*playing with his hair*], you're going abroad for the first time in your service.

GEORGE. [*Aside*] Every word can be heard in the next room. If they've come one upstairs.

MARCHIONESS. And now, my dear George, before you go I want to give you my advice; and you mustn't despise me because I'm an old woman. We old women know a great deal more than you can give us credit for. You are a good man — so was your father — so was your mother — so was mine — so was our founder; we were born to lead! Common people expect it from us. It is our duty. Do you not remember the Chronicles of Froissart? [*With enjoyment*] I think I can quote it for you; I've a wonderful memory for my age. [*With closed eyes*] It is in the fifty-ninth chapter — Godefroy D'Alroy helde the towne of Amende duryng the siege before it. It said "the towne was beset but with pales, and captayne was Sir Amory of Pauy — the Marshall of Carcassoune — who had been was not able to hold agaynste the poste, when one Godefroy D'Alroy came that rather than he woulde depart, he wolde keepe it to the best of his power. Whereat the souldiers cheered and sayd, 'Lead us on, Sir Godefroy.'

And then began a fierce assault; and they withyn were chased, and sought for shelter from street to street. But Godefroy stood at the gate so valyantly that the souldiers helde the towne until the comyng of the Earl of Haynault with twelve thousande men."

GEORGE. [*Aside*] I wish she'd go. If she once gets onto Froissart, she'll never know when to stop.

MARCHIONESS. When my boy fights — and you will fight — he is sure to distinguish himself. It is his nature to — [*toys with his hair*] — he cannot forget his birth. And when you meet these Asiatic ruffians, who have dared to revolt, and to outrage humanity, you will strike as your ancestor Sir Galtier of Chevrault struck at Poitiers. [*Changing tone of voice as if remembering*] Froissart mentions it thus: — "Sir Galtier, with his four squires, was in the front, in that battell, and there did marvels in arms. And Sir Galtier rode up to the Prince, and sayd to him — 'Sir, take your horse and ryde forth, this journey is yours. God is this daye in your handes. Gette us to the French Kynge's batayle. I think verily by his valyantesse, he wold not fly. Advance banner in the name of God and of Saynt George!' And Sir Galtier galloped forward to see his Kynge's victory, and meet his own death."

GEORGE. [*Aside*] If Esther hears all this!

MARCHIONESS. There is another subject about which I should have spoken to you before this; but an absurd prudery forbade me. I may never see you more. I am old — and you — are going into battle — [*kissing his forehead with emotion*] — and this may be our last meeting. [*Noise heard within folding-doors*] What's that?

GEORGE. Nothing — my man Dixon is there.

MARCHIONESS. We may not meet again on this earth. I do not fear your conduct, my George, with men; but I know the temptations that beset a youth who is well born. But a true soldier, a true gentleman, should not only be without fear, but without reproach. It is easier to fight a furious man than to forego the conquest of a love-sick girl. A thousand Sepoys slain in battle cannot redeem the honour of a man who has betrayed the confidence of a trusting woman. Think, George, what dishonour — what stain upon

your manhood — to hurl a girl to shame and degradation! And what excuse for it? That she is plebeian? A man of real honour will spare the woman who has confessed her love for him as he would give quarter to an enemy he had disarmed. [*Taking his hands*] Let my boy avoid the snares so artfully spread; and when he asks his mother to welcome the woman he has chosen for his wife, let me take her to my arms and plant a motherly kiss upon the white brow of a lady. [*Noise of a fall heard within folding-doors. Rising.*] What's that?

GEORGE [*rising*]. Nothing.

MARCHIONESS. I heard a cry.

[*Folding-doors open; discovering ESTHER with POLLY, staggering in, fainting*]

POLLY. George! George!

[*GEORGE goes up and ESTHER falls in his arms. GEORGE places ESTHER on sofa. GEORGE on her right, POLLY on her left*]

MARCHIONESS [*coming down*]. Who are these women?

POLLY. Women!

MARCHIONESS. George D'Alroy, these persons should have been sent away. How could you dare to risk your mother meeting women of their stamp?

POLLY [*violently*]. What does she mean? How dare she call me a woman? What's she, I'd like to know?

GEORGE. Silence, Polly! You mustn't insult my mother.

MARCHIONESS. The insult is from you. I leave you, and I hope that time may induce me to forget this scene of degradation. [*Turning to go*]

GEORGE. Stay, mother. [*MARCHIONESS turns slightly away*] Before you go [*GEORGE has raised ESTHER from sofa in his arms*] let me present to you Mrs. George D'Alroy. *My wife!*

MARCHIONESS. Married!

GEORGE. Married.

[*MARCHIONESS sinks into easy-chair; GEORGE replaces ESTHER on sofa, but still retains her hand. Three hesitating taps at door heard. GEORGE crosses to door, opens it, discovers ECCLES, who enters. GEORGE drops down back of MARCHIONESS'S chair*]

ECCLES. They told us to come up. When your man came Polly was out; so I thought I should do instead. [*Calling at door*] Come up, Sam.

[*Enter SAM in his Sunday clothes short cane and smoking a cheroot. He nods and grins — POLLY to MARCHIONESS — SAM cheroot from his mouth and removes his hat*]

ECCLES. Sam had just called we three — Sam and I, and you all came in the 'ansom cab together. Didn't we, Sam.

[*ECCLES and SAM go over girls, and ECCLES drops to front of table — smiling*]

MARCHIONESS [*with glasses up*]. GEORGE. Who is this?

GEORGE [*coming left of MARCHIONESS*]. My wife's father.

MARCHIONESS. What is he?

GEORGE. A — nothing.

ECCLES. I am one of nature's men. Happy to see you, my lady [*turning to her*] — now, my daughter have told me who you are — [*GEORGE turns his back in an agony as ECCLES crosses to MARCHIONESS*] — we old fathers and mothers of the young couples, ought to make friends.

[*Holding out his dirty*]

MARCHIONESS [*shrinking back*]. away! [*ECCLES goes back to table disgusted*] What's his name?

GEORGE. Eccles.

MARCHIONESS. Eccles! Eccles! There never was an Eccles. He exists.

ECCLES. Don't he, though? d'ye call this?

[*Goes up again to back of table. SAM drops down. He is going to take a decanter. SAM stops him*]

MARCHIONESS. No Eccles was born!

GEORGE. He takes the liberty notwithstanding. And I wish he wouldn't.

MARCHIONESS. And who is the man? Is he also Eccles?

[*SAM looks round. POLLY close up to him, and looks defiant glance at the MARCHIONESS*]

GEORGE. No.

MARCHIONESS. Thank good! What then?

GEORGE. His name is Gerridge. MARCHIONESS. Gerridge! It b

one's teeth. Why is he here? GEORGE. He is making love to Polly, my wife's sister.

MARCHIONESS. And what is he?

GEORGE. A gasman.

MARCHIONESS. He looks it. [GEORGE goes to ESTHER] And what is she — the sister?

[ECCLES, who has been casting longing eyes at the decanter on table, edges towards it, and when he thinks no one is noticing, fills wine-glass]

POLLY [asserting herself indignantly]. The ballet at the Theatre Royal, that. So was Esther. We're not tired of what we are. We have no choice.

GEORGE. That's right, Polly! pitch them swells! — who are they?

[ECCLES by this time has seized wine-glass, and turning his back, is about to drink, when HAWTREE enters. ECCLES hides glass under his coat, and pretends to be looking up at picture]

HAWTREE [entering]. George! [Stops shyly, looking round] So, all's well!

MARCHIONESS [rising]. Captain Hawtree came to my carriage; I am disappointed.

[Takes HAWTREE'S arm and is going up]

ECCLES [who has tasted the claret, comes out with a grimace, exclaiming].

[POLLY goes to piano — sits on stool — SAM, back to audience, leaning on piano. ECCLES exits through folding-doors]

GEORGE. [To MARCHIONESS] Don't linger. You may not see me again.

[ESTHER rises in nervous excitement, clutching GEORGE'S hand.

MARCHIONESS stops. ESTHER brings GEORGE down]

ESTHER [with arm round his neck]. George! must you go?

[They come to front of table]

GEORGE. Yes.

ESTHER. I can't leave you. I'll go with you!

GEORGE. Impossible! The country is so unsettled.

ESTHER. May I come after you?

GEORGE. Yes.

ESTHER [with her head on his shoulder].

MARCHIONESS [coming down, HAWTREE at door]. It is his duty to go. The honour calls him. The honour of the family — our honour.

ESTHER. But I love him so! Pray don't be angry with me!

HAWTREE [looking at watch and coming down]. George!

GEORGE. I must go, love.

[HAWTREE goes up to door again]

MARCHIONESS [advancing]. Let me arm you, George — let your mother, as in the days of old. There is blood — and blood, my son. See, your wife cries when she should be proud of you!

GEORGE. My Esther is all that is good and noble. No lady born to a coronet could be gentler or more true. Esther, my wife, fetch me my sword, and buckle my belt around me.

ESTHER [clinging to him]. No, no; I can't!

GEORGE. Try. [Whispers to ESTHER] To please my mother. [To MARCHIONESS] You shall see. [ESTHER totters up stage, POLLY assisting her, and brings down his sword. As ESTHER is trying to buckle his belt, he whispers] I've left money for you, my darling. My lawyer will call on you to-morrow. Forgive me! I tried hard to tell you we were ordered for India; but when the time came, my heart failed me, and I —

[ESTHER, before she can succeed in fastening his sword-belt, reels, and falls fainting in his arms. POLLY hurries to her. SAM standing at piano, looking frightened; HAWTREE with hand upon handle of door; MARCHIONESS looking on, at right of GEORGE]

ACT DROP

[For call — GEORGE and HAWTREE gone.

ESTHER in chair fainting; POLLY and SAM each side of her, POLLY holding her hands, and SAM fanning her with his red handkerchief. The folding-doors thrown open, and ECCLES standing at back of table offering glass of claret]

ACT III

SCENE. — The room in Stangate (as in Act I). Same furniture as in Act I, with exception of piano, with roll of music tied up on it, in place of bureau. Map of India over mantle-piece. Sword with crape knot, spurs;

and cap, craped, hanging over chimney-piece. Portrait of D'ALROY (large) on mantel-piece. Berceau-nette, and child, with coral, in it. POLLY's bonnet and shawl hanging on peg. Small tin saucepan in fender, fire alight, and kettle on it. Two candles (tallow) in sticks, one of which is broken about three inches from the top and hangs over. Slate and pencil on table. Jug on table, bandbox and ballet skirt on table. At rise of curtain POLLY discovered at table, back of stage. Comes down and places skirt in bandbox. She is dressed in black.

POLLY [*placing skirt in box, and leaning her chin upon her hand*]. There — there's the dress for poor Esther in case she gets the engagement, which I don't suppose she will. It's too good luck, and good luck never comes to her, poor thing. [*Goes up to back of cradle*] Baby's asleep still. How good he looks — as good as if he were dead, like his poor father; and alive too, at the same time, like his dear self. Ah! dear me; it's a strange world. [*Sits in chair right of table, feeling in pocket for money*] Four and elevenpence. That must do for to-day and to-morrow. Esther is going to bring in the rusk for Georgy. [*Takes up slate*] Three, five — eight, and four — twelve, one shilling — father can only have twopence. [*This all to be said in one breath*] He must make do with that till Saturday, when I get my salary. If Esther gets the engagement, I sha'n't have many more salaries to take; I shall leave the stage and retire into private life. I wonder if I shall like private life, and if private life will like me. It will seem so strange being no longer Miss Mary Eccles — but Mrs. Samuel Gerridge. [*Writes it on slate*] "Mrs. Samuel Gerridge." [*Laughs bashfully*] La! to think of my being Mrs. Anybody! How annoyed Susan Smith will be! [*Writing on slate*] "Mrs. Samuel Gerridge presents her compliments to Miss Susan Smith, and Mrs. Samuel Gerridge requests the favour of Miss Susan Smith's company to tea, on Tuesday evening next, at Mrs. Samuel Gerridge's house." [*Pause*] Poor Susan! [*Beginning again*] "P.S. — Mrs. Samuel Gerridge —"

[*Knock heard at room door;*
POLLY starts]

SAM. [*Without*] Polly, open the door.
POLLY. Sam! come in.
SAM. [*Without*] I can't.
POLLY. Why not?

SAM. I've got somethin' on my mind.
[POLLY rises and opens door]
SAM enters, carrying two sheets of wall-paper, one in his hand, and a small table on his head, which he deposits on stage, then puts roll of paper on piano, as also his hat. SAM has a rule-pocket in his hand.

POLLY [*shuts door*]. What's that?

SAM [*pointing to table with rule-pocket*]. Furniture. How are you, my Polly?
[*Kissing her*] You look handsomer than ever this morning. [*Dances and sings*]. "Tid-dle-di-tum-ti-di-do."

POLLY. What's the matter, Sam? Are you mad?

SAM. No, 'appy — much the better.

POLLY. Where have you been these two days?

SAM [*all excitement*]. That's just what I'm goin' to tell yer. Polly, my dear, my brightest batwing and most brilliant burner, what do yer think?

POLLY. Oh, do go on, Sam, don't slap your face.

SAM. Well, then, you've 'ear of old Binks, the plumber, glazier, and gasfitter, who died months ago?

POLLY. Yes.

SAM [*sternly and deliberately*]. I've bought 'is business.

POLLY. No!

SAM [*excitedly*]. Yes, of 'is business. Old Mrs. Binks — so much down and so much more at the end of the road. [*Dances and sings*]

Ri-ti-toodle
Roodle-oodle
Ri-ti-tooral-lay.

POLLY. La, Sam.

SAM [*pacing stage up and down*]. I've bought the goodwill, fixed the fittin's, stock, rolls of gas-pipe, sheets of lead. [*Jumps on table, facing POLLY*] Yes, Polly, I'm a tradesman with a shop — a master tradesman. [*Coming to POLLY seriously*] All I want to complete the premises is a mistress.

[*Tries to kiss her. She turns him away*]

POLLY. Sam, don't be foolish.

SAM [*arm round her waist*]. Com-

s. Sam Gerridge, Polly, my patent-day-and-night-light. You'll furnish completely.

[POLLY goes up, SAM watching her admiringly; he then sees slate, snatches it up and looks at it. She snatches it from him with a shriek, and rubs out the writing, looking daggers at him, SAM laughing]

Only to think now.

[Putting arm round her waist. POLLY pouting]

LY. Don't be a goose.

[going towards table]. I spent whole of yesterday lookin' up here. Now I bought that a bar-and I brought it 'ere to show you for your approval. I've bought lots of other things, and I'll bring 'em all to show you for your approval.

LY. I couldn't think what had come of you. [Seated right of table] . Couldn't yer? Oh, I say, I d'yer to choose the new paper for the back-parlour just behind the shop you know. Now what d'yer of this?

[Fetching a pattern from piano and unrolling it]

LY. No, I don't like that. [SAM shows the other, a flaming pattern] Ah! neat.

. Yes, that's neat and quiet. New-paper it, and new-furnish it, and shall all be bran-new.

[Puts paper on top of piano]

LY. But won't it cost a lot of money?

[bravely]. I can work for it. I'll get customers in the shop, and you can have the back-parlour, I can work like a man. [Sits on table, beckons POLLY to come; she comes left of table, SAM puts arm round POLLY, sentimentally]

LY. Fancy, at night, when the shop's shut, and the shutters are up, counting the till together! [Changing dinner] Besides, that isn't all I've got. I've been writin', and what I've written, I've got printed.

LY. No!

. True.

LY. You've been writing — me?

[Delighted] . No — about the shop. [POLLY takes roll of paper from pocket of his canvas slop] . Mustn't laugh — yer know — it's my first attempt. I wrote it the night before last; and when I thought of you

the words seemed to flow like — red-hot solder. [Reads] Hem! "Samuel Gerridge takes this opportunity of informin' the nobility, gentry, and inhabitants of the Borough-road —"

POLLY. The Borough-road?

SAM. Well, there ain't many of the nobility and gentry as lives in the Borough-road, but it pleases the inhabitants to make 'em believe yer think so [resuming] — "of informin' the nobility, gentry and inhabitants of the Borough-road, and its vicinity" — and "its vicinity." [Looking at her] Now I think that's rather good, eh?

POLLY. Yes. [Doubtfully] I've heard worse.

SAM. I first thought of saying neighbour'ood; but then vicinity sounds so much more genteel [resuming] — "and its vicinity, that 'e has entered upon the business of the late Mr. Binks, 'is relict, the present Mrs. B., 'avin' disposed to 'im of the same" — now listen, Polly, because it gets interestin' — "S. G. —"

POLLY. S. G. Who's he?

SAM [looking at POLLY with surprise]. Why, me. S. G. — Samuel Gerridge — me, us. We're S. G. Now don't interrupt me, or you'll cool my metal, and then I can't work. "S. G. 'opes that, by a constant attention to business, and" — mark this — "by supplyin' the best articles at the most reasonable prices, to merit a continuance of those favours which it will ever be 'is constant study to deserve." There! [Turning on table triumphantly] Stop a bit, — there's a little bit more yet. "Bell-'angin', gas-fittin', plumbin', and glazin', as usual." There! and it's all my own!

[Puts circular on mantel-piece, and crossing contemplates it]

POLLY. Beautiful, Sam. It looks very attractive from here, don't it?

SAM. [Postman's knock] There's the postman. I'll go. I shall send some of these out by post.

[Goes off and returns with letter]

POLLY [taking it]. Oh, for Esther. I know who it's from. [Places letter on mantel-piece. At chair left of table. SAM sits corner of table, reading circular. Seriously] Sam, who do you think was here last night?

SAM. Who?

POLLY. Captain Hawtree.

SAM [deprecatingly]. Oh, 'im! — Come back from India, I suppose.

POLLY. Yes,—luckily Esther was out.

SAM. I never liked that long swell. He was a 'uppish, conceited

POLLY [*sitting at end of table*]. Oh, he's better than he used to be—he's a major now. He's only been in England a fortnight.

SAM. Did he tell yer anything about Do Alroy?

POLLY [*leaning against table end*]. Yes; he said he was riding out not far from the cantonment, and was surrounded by a troop of Sepoy cavalry, which took him prisoner, and galloped off with him.

SAM. But about 'is death?

POLLY. Oh! [*hiding her face*] that he said was believed to be too terrible to mention.

SAM [*crossing to POLLY at table*]. Did 'e tell yer anything else?

POLLY. No; he asked a lot of questions, and I told him everything. How poor Esther had taken her widowhood and what a dear good baby the baby was, and what a comfort to us all, and how Esther had come back to live with us again.

SAM [*sharply*]. And the reason for it?

POLLY [*looking down*]. Yes.

SAM. How your father got all the money that 'e'd left for Esther?

POLLY [*sharply*]. Don't say any more about that, Sam.

SAM. Oh! I only think Captain 'Awtree ought to know where the money did go to, and you shouldn't try and heroen your father, and let 'im suppose that you and Esther spent it all.

POLLY. I told him—I told him—I told him.

SAM. Did you tell 'im that your father was always at 'armonic meetin's at taverns, and 'ad 'arf cracked 'isself with drink, and was always singin' the songs and makin' the speeches 'e 'eard there, and was always goin' on about 'is wrongs as one of the workin' classes? 'E's a pretty one for one of the workin' classes, 'e is! 'Asn't done a stroke of work those twenty year. Now, I am one of the workin' classes, but I don't 'owl about it. I work, I don't spout.

POLLY. Hold your tongue, Sam. I won't have you say any more against poor father. He has his faults, but he's a very clever man.

SAM. Ah! What else did Captain Hawtree say?

POLLY. He advised us to apply to Mr. D'Alroy's mother.

SAM. What! the Marquissy? what did you say to that?

POLLY. I said that Esther would hear of it. And so the Major said he'd write to Esther, and I suppose is the letter.

SAM. Now, Polly, come along choose the paper for the little parlour.

[*Going to table and taking to wall behind door*]

POLLY [*rising*]. Can't. Who's mind baby?

SAM. The baby? Oh, I forgot about 'im. [*Goes to cradle*] I see [*Goes to window casually*] There's father comin' down the street. V 'e mind 'im?

POLLY [*going up*]. I daresay he. If I promise him an extra sixpence Saturday. [*SAM opens window*] Father!

SAM. [*Aside*] 'E looks down in mouth, 'e does. I suppose 'e's 's drink this morning. [*Goes to P*]

[*Enter ECCLES in shabby black. P on entering, looks at SAM, away in disgust, takes off hat, it on piano, and shambles it stage. Taking chair, places it sits before fire*]

POLLY [*goes to ECCLES*]. Come stop a bit, father?

ECCLES. No; not for long. [*comes down*] Good morning, Sa [*going back to work?* that's right boy, stick to it. [*Pokes fire*] to it—nothing like it.

SAM. [*Aside*] Now, isn't that bad? No, Mr. Eccles. I've kno off for the day.

ECCLES [*waving poker*]. That's—that's very bad! Nothing like—for the young. I don't wor much as I used to, myself, but I h [*POLLY sitting on corner of table up*] see the young 'uns at it. It doe good, and it does them good, too. does the poet say?

[*Rising, impressively, and le on table*]

"A carpenter said tho' that was well. It was better by far to defend it with A currier, wiser than both put togeth. Sudd say what you will, there is no like labour.

For a' that and a' that,
Your ribbon, gown and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The working man's the gold for a' the

Sits again, triumphantly wagging his head]

[*Aside*] This is one of the public-buffers, that wants all the wages of the work, an idle old —

Goes in disgust to piano, puts on cap, and takes rolls of paper under his arm]

Mr. [To ECCLES] Esther will be in by. [*Persuasively*] Do, father.

Es. No, no, I tell you I won't!

Mr. [*whispering, arm round his* And I'll give you sixpence extra to-day.

ECCLES's face relaxes into a broad grin. POLLY gets hat and cloak]

Es. Ah! you sly little puss, how how to get over your poor

er. [*Aside*] Yes, with sixpence.

Mr. [*putting on bonnet and cloak at* Give the cradle a rock if baby

[*crossing to ECCLES*]. If you happen to want employment or rent, Mr. Eccles, just cast your r this. [*Puts circular on table, and POLLY at door*] Stop a bit, got to give the baby one.

Throws circular into cradle.

Exeunt, POLLY first. ECCLES takes out pipe from pocket, looks into it, then blows through it making a squeaking noise, and finishes by tenderly placing it on table. He then hunts all his pockets for tobacco, finally finding a little paper packet containing a screw of tobacco in his waistcoat pocket, which he also places on table after turning up the corner of the tablecloth for the purpose of emptying the contents of his pocket of the few remnants of past screws of tobacco on to the bare table and mixing a little out of the packet with it and filling pipe. He then brushes all that remains on the table into the paper packet, pinches it up, and carefully replaces it in waistcoat pocket. Having put the pipe into his mouth, he looks about for a light, across his shoulder and under table, though never rising from the chair; seeing nothing, his face assumes an expression of comic anguish. Turning to table he angrily replaces tablecloth and then notices SAM'S

circular. His face relaxes into a smile, and picking it up he tears the circular in half, makes a spill of it, and lighting it at fire, stands, with his back to fireplace, and smokes vigorously]

ECCLES. Poor Esther Nice market she's brought her pigs to — ugh! Mind the baby indeed! What good is he to me? That fool of a girl to throw away all her chances! — a *honourable-hess* — and her father not to have on him the price of a pint of early beer or a quartern of cool, refreshing gin! Stopping in here to rock a young honourable! Cuss him!

[*Business, puffs smoke in baby's face, rocking cradle*]

Are we slaves, we working men?

[*Sings savagely*] "Britons never, never, never shall be —" [*Nodding his head sagaciously, sits by table*] I won't stand this, I've writ to the old cat — I mean to the Marquissy — to tell her that her daughter-in-law and her grandson is almost starving. That fool Esther is too proud to write to her for money. I hate pride — it's *beastly*! [*Rising*] There's no *beastly* pride about me. [*Goes up, smacking his lips*] I'm as dry as a lime-kiln. [*Takes up jug*] Milk! — [*with disgust*] for this young aristocratic pauper. Everybody in the house is sacrificed for him! [*At foot of cradle, with arms on chair back*] And to think that a *working man*, and a member of the Committee of Banded Brothers for the Regeneration of Human Kind, by means of equal diffusion of intelligence and equal division of property, should be thursty, while this cub — [*Draws aside curtain, and looks at child. After a pause —*] That there coral he's got round his neck is *gold*, real *gold*! [*With hand on knob at end of cradle*] Oh, Society! Oh, Governments! Oh, Class Legislation! — *is this right*? Shall this mindless wretch enjoy himself, while sleeping, with a jewelled gawd, and his poor old grandfather want the price of half a pint? No! it shall not be! Rather than see it, I will myself resent this outrage on the rights of man! and in this holy crusade of class against class, of the weak and lowly against the powerful and strong — [*pointing to child*] — I will strike one blow for freedom! [*Goes to back of cradle*] He's asleep. It will fetch ten bob round the corner; and if the Marquissy gives us anything it can be got out with some

o' that. [*Steals coral*] Lie still, my darling! — it's grandfather a-watchin' over you —

"Who ran to catch me when I fell,
And kicked the place to make it well?
My grandfather!"

[*Rocking cradle with one hand; leaves it quickly, and as he takes hat off piano ESTHER enters. She is dressed as a widow, her face pale, and her manner quick and imperious. She carries a parcel and paper bag of rusks in her hand; she puts parcel on table, goes to cradle, kneels down and kisses child*]

ECCLES. My lovey had a nice walk? You should wrap yourself up well, — you are so liable to catch cold.

ESTHER. My Georgy? — Where's his coral? [ECCLES, going to door, fumbles with lock nervously, and is going out as ESTHER speaks] Gone! — Father! [*Rising — ECCLES stops*] The child's coral — where is it?

ECCLES [*confused*]. Where's what, duckey?

ESTHER. The coral! You've got it, — I know it! Give it me! [*Quickly and imperiously*] Give it me! [ECCLES takes coral from his pocket and gives it back] If you dare to touch my child —

[*Goes to cradle*]

ECCLES. Esther! [*Going quickly to piano and banging hat on it*] Am I not your father? —

[ESTHER gets round to front of table]

ESTHER. And I am his mother!

ECCLES [*coming to her*]. Do you bandy words with me, you pauper, you pauper!!! to whom I have given shelter — shelter to you and your brat! I've a good mind —

[*Raising his clenched fist*]

ESTHER [*confronting him*]. If you dare! I am no longer your little drudge — your frightened servant. When mother died — [ECCLES changes countenance and covers beneath her glance] — and I was so high, I tended you, and worked for you — and you beat me. That time is past. I am a woman — I am a wife — a widow — a mother! Do you think I will let you outrage him? Touch me if you dare!

[*Advancing a step*]

ECCLES [*bursting into tears and coming down*]. And this is my own child, which I nussed when a babby, and sang

"Cootsicum Coo" to afore she speak. [*Gets hat from piano, and turns a step or two*] Hon. Mr. Alroy [ESTHER drops down behind by table], I forgive you for all th have said. I forgive you for a you have done. In everything I have done I have acted with intentions. May the babe in cradle never treat you as you ha day tret a grey 'aired father. M never cease to love and honour y you have ceased to love and me, after all that I have done fo and the position to which I have you by my own industry. [*Goes t*] May he never behave to you li bad daughters of King Lear; an you never live to feel how much sharper than a serpent's [*slight p if remembering quotation*] scale i have a thankless child!

ESTHER [*kneeling back of cradle*] darling! [*Arranging bed and coral to baby's lips, then to her*] Mamma's come back to her own she stay away from him so long? and looks at sabre, etc.] My Geor think that you can never look up face or hear his voice. My gallant, handsome husband! M and my love! [*Comes down, pacing*] Oh! to be a soldier, and to fig wretches who destroyed him — took my darling from me! [*Ac cutting with sabre*] To gallop upon their upturned faces. [*C with action, breaks down sobbing at a piece; sees letter*] What's this? tain Hawtree's hand. [*Sitting in reads, at left hand of table*] "M. Mrs. D'Alroy, — I returned to H less than a fortnight ago. I have papers and effects of my poor fr which I am anxious to deliver t and I beg of you to name a day v can call with them and see you; same time let me express my d sympathy with your affliction. husband's loss was mourned by man in the regiment. [ESTHER l letter on her heart, and then resuma ing] I have heard with great pain pecuniary embarrassments into accident and imprudence of others placed you. I trust you will no sider me, one of poor George's comrades and friends, either int or impertinent in sending the en [*she takes out a cheque*], and in h that, should any further diffi

ou will inform me of them, and
er that I am, dear Mrs. D'Alroy,
nd always, your faithful and
friend, Arthur Hawtree."
a goes to cradle and bends over it]
boy, if you could read it!
Sobs, with head on head of cradle]

[Enter POLLY]

r. Father gone!
ER. Polly, you look quite flur-

POLLY laughs and whispers to
ESTHER]

ad of table, taking POLLY in her
d kissing her] So soon? Well,
ing, I hope you may be happy.
r. Yes. Sam's going to speak
er about it this afternoon.
round table, putting rucks in
r] Did you see the agent,

ER [sits by table] Yes; the
e didn't come—he broke his
ment again.

r [sits opposite at table]. Nasty,
low!

ER. The agent said it didn't
he thought I should get the en-
t. He'll only give me thirty
a week, though.

r. But you said that two
was the regular salary.

ER. Yes, but they know I'm
nd want the engagement, and
advantage of me.

r. Never mind, Esther. I put
ss in that handbox. It looks
s good as new.

ER. I've had a letter from Cap-
wtree.

r. I know, dear; he came here
at.

ER. A dear, good letter—
of George, and enclosing a
or thirty pounds.

r. Oh, how kind! Don't you
er.

Voise of carriage-wheels without]
ER. I sha'n't.

enters, breathless. ESTHER and
POLLY rise]

ss. It's the Marquissy in her
[ESTHER puts on the lid of band-
ow, girls, do be civil to her,
e may do something for us.
hat on piano] I see the coach
coming out of the "Rainbow."
Hastily pulls an old comb out of
his pocket, and puts his hair in
order]

ESTHER. The Marquise!

[ESTHER comes down to end of
table, POLLY holding her hand]

ECCLES [at door]. This way, my
lady—up them steps. They're rather
awkward for the likes o' you; but them
as is poor and lowly must do as best
they can with steps and circumstances.

[Enter MARQUISE. She surveys the place
with aggressive astonishment]

MARQUISE [going down, half aside].
What a hole! And to think that my
grandson should breathe such an at-
mosphere, and be contaminated by
such associations! [To ECCLES, who is a
little up] Which is the young woman
who married my son?

ESTHER. I am Mrs. George D'Alroy,
widow of George D'Alroy. Who are
you?

MARQUISE. I am his mother, the
Marquise de St. Maur.

ESTHER [with the grand air]. Be
seated, I beg.

[ECCLES takes chair from right
centre, which ESTHER immedi-
ately seizes as SAM enters with
an easy chair on his head, which
he puts down, not seeing MAR-
QUISE, who instantly sits down
in it, concealing it completely]

SAM [astonished]. It's the Marquissy!
[Looking at her] My eyes! These aris-
tocrats are fine women—plenty of 'em
—[describing circle] quality and quan-
tity!

POLLY. Go away, Sam; you'd better
come back.

[ECCLES nudges him and bustles
him towards door. Exit SAM.
ECCLES shuts door on him]

ECCLES [coming down right of MAR-
QUISE, rubbing his hands] If we'd a-
know'd your ladyship 'ad been a-com-
ing we'd a' 'ad the place cleaned up a
bit.

[With hands on chair back, in
lower right corner of stage. He
gets round to right, behind MAR-
QUISE, who turns the chair
slightly from him]

POLLY. Hold your tongue, father!
[ECCLES crushed]

MARQUISE. [To ESTHER] You re-
member me, do you not?

ESTHER. Perfectly, though I only
saw you once. [Seating herself en
grande dame] May I ask what has
procured me the honour of this visit?

MARQUISE. I was informed that

you were in want, and I came to offer you assistance.

ESTHER. I thank you for your offer, and the delicate consideration for my feelings with which it is made. I need no assistance.

[*ECCLES groans and leans on piano*]

MARQUISE. A letter that I received last night informed me that you did.

ESTHER. May I ask if that letter came from Captain Hawtree?

MARQUISE. No — from this person — your father, I think.

ESTHER. [*To ECCLES*] How dare you interfere in my affairs?

ECCLES. My lovey, I did it with the best intentions.

MARQUISE. Then you will not accept assistance from me?

ESTHER. No.

POLLY [*aside to ESTHER, holding her hand*]. Bless you, my darling.

[*POLLY standing beside her*]

MARQUISE. But you have a child — a son — my grandson. [*With emotion*]

ESTHER. Master D'Alroy wants for nothing.

POLLY. [*Aside*] And never shall.

[*ECCLES groans and turns on to piano*]

MARQUISE. I came here to propose that my grandson should go back with me.

[*POLLY rushes up to cradle*]

ESTHER [*rising defiantly*]. What! part with my boy! I'd sooner die!

MARQUISE. You can see him when you wish. As for money, I —

ESTHER. Not for ten thousand million worlds — not for ten thousand million marchionesses!

ECCLES. Better do what the good lady asks you, my dear; she's advising you for your own good, and for the child's likewise.

MARQUISE. Surely you cannot intend to bring up my son's son in a place like this?

ESTHER. I do. [*Goes up to cradle*]

ECCLES. It is a poor place, and we are poor people, sure enough. We ought not to fly in the faces of our pastors and masters — our pastresses and mistresses.

POLLY. [*Aside*] Oh, hold your tongue, do!

[*Up at cradle*]

ESTHER [*before cradle*]. Master George D'Alroy will remain with his mother. The offer to take him from her is an insult to his dead father and to him.

ECCLES. [*Aside*] He don't seem to feel it, stuck-up little beast.

MARQUISE. But you have no — how can you rear him? — how can you educate him? — how can you

ESTHER [*tearing dress from bandbox*]. Turn columbine, — go on the again and dance.

MARQUISE [*rising*]. You are in — you forget that I am a lady.

ESTHER. You forget that I am your mother. Do you dare to offer to my child — his breathing image — living memory — with money? [*Goes to door and throws it open*] There! — door — go!

ECCLES. [*To MARQUISE, who has gone aside*] Very sorry, my lady, as I should be tret in this way, which is not my wishes.

MARQUISE. Silence! [*ECCLES sits down, putting back chair. MARQUISE goes up to door*] Mrs. D'Alroy, I think could have increased my son for the wretched marriage my son was decoyed into, it would be to conduct this day to his mother.

ESTHER [*falling into POLLY'S arms*]. Oh, Polly! Polly!

ECCLES [*looking after her*]. Away and not to leave a sov. behind her! [*Running up to open door*] Cat! Stingy old cat!

[*Almost runs to fire, and pulls out carriage-wheels violently; carriage-wheels without*]

ESTHER. I'll go to my room and lie down. Let me have the baby, or the old woman may come back and see him.

[*Exit ESTHER, and POLLY, with baby*]

ECCLES. Well, women is the stinatest devils as never wore shoes. Children? Beasts! Beasts!

[*Enter SAM and POLLY*]

SAM. Come along, Polly, and get it over at once. [*SAM places piano, and goes to table. POLLY takes bandbox from table, and places it up*] Now, Mr. Eccles [*ECCLES turns round, facing SAM*], since you've talkin' on family matters, I'd like 'ave a word with yer, so take the opportunity to —

ECCLES [*waving his hand gracefully*]. Take what you like, and then I'll be more [*rising and leaning over*] Samuel Gerridge. That hand of hand that has never turned its back on a friend, or a bottle to give him

[*Sings, front of*]

and by my friend,
and by my friend,
and by my friend,
stand to me — me, gentlemen!"

Well, Mr. Eccles, sir, it's
[*aside, coming down to SAM*].
tell him too sudden, Sam — it
shock his feelings.

It's this; yer know that for
t four years I've been keepin'
ay with Mary — Polly.

[*Turning to her and smiling*].
ECCLES drops into chair as if
shot]

ES. Go it! go it! strike home,
man! Strike on this grey head!
"Britons, strike home!" Here
g his chest], to my heart! Don't
ne! Have a go at my grey hairs.
m — pull 'em out! A long pull,
strong pull, and a pull all to-

[*Cries, and drops his face on arm
on table*]

Y. Oh, father! I wouldn't hurt
feelings for the world.

[*Patting his head*]

No, Mr. Eccles, I don't want
your feelin's, but I'm a-goin' to
upon a business. Here's a cir-

[*Offering one*]

ES [*indignantly*]. Circ'lars.
are circ'lars? — compared to a
s feelings?

And I want Polly to name
y, sir, and so I ask you —

ES. This is 'ard, this is 'ard.
my daughters marries a soger.
her goes a-gasfitting.

[*annoyed*]. The business which
able me to maintain a wife is
f the late Mr. Binks, plumber,
etc.

ES [*rising, sings. Air, "Lost
lle"*].

have given thee to a plumber,
y have broken every vow,
have given thee to a plumber,
my heart, my heart is breaking
ow."

[*Drops into chair again*]
gentlemen!

[*SAM thrusts circulars into his
pocket, and turns away angrily*]

LY. You know, father, you can
and see me. [*Leans over him*]

[*sotto voce*]. No, no.

[*Motions to POLLY*]

ES [*looking up*]. So I can, and
a comfort. [*Shaking her hand*]

And you can come and see me, and that's
a comfort. I'll come and see you often
— very often — every day [*SAM turns
up stage in horror*], and crack a fatherly
bottle [*rising*], and shed a friendly
tear.

[*Wipes eyes with dirty pocket-
handkerchief, which he pulls
from breast pocket*]

POLLY. Do, father, do.

[*Goes up and gets tea-tray*]

SAM [*with a gulp*]. Yes, Mr. Eccles,
do.

[*Goes to POLLY and gesticulates be-
hind tray*]

ECCLES. I will. [*Goes to centre of
stage*]. And this it is to be a father. I
would part with any of my children for
their own good, readily — if I was paid
for it. [*Goes to right corner; sings*]
"For I know that the angels are whis-
pering to me" — me, gentlemen!

[*POLLY gets tea-things*]

SAM. I'll try and make Polly a good
husband, and anything that I can do to
prove it [*lowering his voice*], in the way
of spirituous liquors and tobacco [*slip-
ping coin into his hand, unseen by POLLY*]
shall be done.

ECCLES [*lightening up and placing his
left hand on SAM's head*].

"Be kind to thy father,

Wherever you be,

For he is a blessing

And credit to thee, — thee, gentlemen."

[*Gets to centre of stage*]. Well, my chil-
dren — bless you, take the blessing of
a grey-aired father. [*POLLY looking
from one to the other*] Samuel Gerridge,
she shall be thine. [*Mock heroically,
looking at money*] You shall be his
wife [*looking at POLLY*] and you [*looking
at SAM*] shall be her husband — for a
husband I know no fitter — no "gas-
fitter" man. [*Runs to piano and takes
hat; goes to door, looks comically pathetic
at SAM and POLLY, puts on hat and
comes towards centre of stage*] I've a
friend waiting for me round the corner,
which I want to have a word with; and
may you never know how much more
sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to
have a marriageable daughter.

[*Sings*]

"When I heard she was married,

I breathed not a tone,

The heyes of all round me

Was fixed on my h'own;

I flew to my chamber

To hide my despair,

I tore the bright circlet
Of gems from my hair.
When I heard she was married,
When I heard she was married — ”

[Breaks down. Exit]

POLLY [drying her eyes]. There; Sam.
I always told you that though father
had his faults, his heart was in the right
place.

SAM. Poor Polly.

[Crosses to fireplace. Knock at door]

POLLY [top of table]. Come in.

[Enter HAWTREE]

Major Hawtree.

[SAM turns away as they shake hands]

HAWTREE. I met the Marquise's
carriage on the bridge. Has she been
here?

[SAM at fire, with back to it]

POLLY. Yes.

HAWTREE. What happened?

POLLY. Oh, she wanted to take away
the child. [At head of table]

SAM. In the coach.

[POLLY sets tea-things]

HAWTREE. And what did Mrs.
D'Alroy say to that?

SAM. Mrs. D'Alroy said that she'd
see 'er blowed first! [POLLY pushes
SAM] — or words to that effect.

HAWTREE. I'm sorry to hear this;
I had hoped — however, that's over.

POLLY [sitting at table]. Yes, it's
over; and I hope we shall hear no more
about it. Want to take away the child,
indeed — like her impudence! What
next! [Getting ready tea-things]
Esther's gone to lie down. I sha'n't
wake her up for tea, though she's had
nothing to eat all day.

SAM [head of table]. Shall I fetch
some shrimps?

POLLY. No. What made you think
of shrimps?

SAM. They're a relish, and consolin'
— at least I always found 'em so.

[Check lights gradually]

POLLY. I won't ask you to take tea
with us, Major, — you're too grand.

[SAM motions approbation to
POLLY, not wanting HAWTREE
to remain]

HAWTREE [placing hat on piano]. Not
at all. I shall be most happy. [Aside]
'Pon my word, these are very good sort
of people. I'd no idea —

SAM [points to HAWTREE]. He's
a-goin' to stop to tea, — well, I ain't.

[Goes up to window and
HAWTREE crosses and sits
posite POLLY at table]

POLLY. Sam! Sam! [Pause
says Eh?] Pull down the blind
light the gas.

SAM. No, don't light up; I like
sort of dusk. It's unbusiness-like
pleasant.

[SAM cuts enormous slice of
and hands it on point of
to Hawtree. Cuts small
of butter and hands it on
of knife to Hawtree, who looks
it through eye-glass, then
it. Sam then helps her.
Polly meantime has poured
tea in two cups, and one
for Sam, sugars them, and
hands cup and saucer to
TREE, who has both hands
He takes it awkwardly and
it on table. POLLY, having
one spoon, tastes SAM's tea,
stirs HAWTREE'S, attracts
attention by doing so. He
into his tea-cup. POLLY
her own tea, and drops
into HAWTREE'S cup, causing
it to spurt in his eye. He
eye-glass and wipes his eye.

POLLY [making tea]. Sugar,
[SAM takes tea and sits facing fire].
there isn't any milk — it'll be here
rectly, it's just his time.

VOICE. [Outside; rattle of milk
Mia-ow.

POLLY. There he is. [Knock
door] Oh, I know; I owe him
pence. [Feeling in her pocket]
have you got fourpence?

[Knock again, louder]
SAM. No [his mouth full], —
got no fourpence.

POLLY. He's very impatient.
in!

[Enter GEORGE, his face bronzed, and
full health. He carries a milk-pail
in his hand, which, after putting
hat on piano, he places on table.]

GEORGE. A fellow hung this
railings, so I brought it in.

[POLLY sees him, and gracefully
sinks down under table on
side. Then SAM, with
mouth full, and bread and
in hand, does the same as
other. HAWTREE pushes
self back a space, in char-
mains motionless. GEORGE
tonished. Picture]

GE. What's the matter with

REE [rising]. George!

GE. Hawtree! You here?

REE [under table]. O-o-o-h! the ghost!

It shan't hurt you, Polly. It's only indigestion.

REE. Then you are not dead?

GE. Dead, no. Where's my

REE. You were reported killed.

GE. It wasn't true.

REE. Alive! My old friend

GE. And well. [Shakes hands] this morning. Where's my

who has popped his head from the tablecloth]. He ain't dead, he's alive.

POLLY rises from under the table slowly]

[pause; approaches him, touches treats]. George! [He nods]

George!

GE. Yes! Yes!

r. Alive! My dear George!

brother! [Looking at him in-

Alive! [Going to him] Oh,

dear brother! [In his arms]

could you go and do so?

[Laughs hysterically]

SAM goes to POLLY. GEORGE

places POLLY in SAM's arms.

SAM kisses POLLY's hand vio-

lently. HAWTREE comes up,

stares — business. SAM with a

stamp of his foot moves away]

GE. Where's Esther?

REE. Here, — in this house.

GE. Here! — doesn't she know

k?

r. No, — how should she?

GE [To HAWTREE]. Didn't you

telegram?

REE. No; where from?

GE. Southampton! I sent it to

b.

REE. I haven't been there

ree days.

r [hysterically]. Oh, my dear,

ear dead-and-gone, come-back-

-oh, brother George!

[GEORGE passes her]

Glad to see yer, sir.

GE. Thank you, Gerridge.

hands] Same to you — but

y [back to audience, and 'kerchief

eyes] She's asleep in her room.

[GEORGE is going; POLLY stops him]

POLLY. You mustn't see her.

GEORGE. Not see her! — after this long absence! — why not?

HAWTREE. She's ill to-day. She has been greatly excited. The news of your death, which we all mourned, has shaken her terribly.

GEORGE. Poor girl! Poor girl!

POLLY. Oh, we all cried so when you died! — [crying] — and now you're alive again, I want to cry ever so much more.

[Crying]

HAWTREE. We must break the news to her gently and by degrees.

[Crosses behind, to fire, taking his tea with him]

SAM. Yes, if you turn the tap on to full pressure, she'll explode.

[SAM turns to HAWTREE, who is just raising cup to his lips and brings it down on saucer with a bang; both annoyed]

GEORGE. To return, and not to be able to see her — to love her — to kiss her!

[Stamps]

POLLY. Hush!

GEORGE. I forgot — I shall wake her!

POLLY. More than that, — you'll wake the baby.

GEORGE. Baby! — what baby?

POLLY. Yours.

GEORGE. Mine? — mine?

POLLY. Yes, — yours and Esther's. Why, didn't you know there was a baby?

GEORGE. No!

POLLY. La! the ignorance of these men!

HAWTREE. Yes, George, you're a father.

[At fireplace]

GEORGE. Why wasn't I told of this? Why didn't you write?

POLLY. How could we when you were dead?

SAM. And 'adn't left your address.

[Looks at HAWTREE, who turns away quickly]

GEORGE. If I can't see Esther, I will see the child. The sight of me won't be too much for its nerves. Where is it?

POLLY. Sleeping in its mother's arms. [GEORGE goes to door — she intercepts him] Please not! Please not!

GEORGE. I must! I will!

POLLY. It might kill her, and you wouldn't like to do that. I'll fetch the baby; but, oh, please don't make a noise. [Going up] You won't make a

noise — you'll be as quiet as you can, won't you? Oh! I can't believe it!

[Exit POLLY. SAM dances break-down and finishes up by looking at HAWTREE, who turns away astonished. SAM disconcerted; sits on chair by table; GEORGE at door]

GEORGE. My baby — my ba — It's a dream! [To SAM] You've seen it — What's it like?

SAM. Oh! it's like a — like a sort of — infant — white and — milky, and all that.

[Enter POLLY with baby wrapped in shawls; GEORGE shuts door and meets her]

POLLY. Gently! gently, — take care! Esther will hardly have it touched.

[SAM rises and gets near to GEORGE]

GEORGE. But I'm its father.

POLLY. That don't matter. She's very particular.

GEORGE. Boy or girl?

POLLY. Guess.

GEORGE. Boy! [POLLY nods. GEORGE proud] What's his name?

POLLY. Guess.

GEORGE. George? [POLLY nods] Eustace? [POLLY nods] Fairfax? Algernon? [POLLY nods; pause] My names!

SAM. [To GEORGE] You'd 'ardly think there was room enough in 'im to 'old so many names, would yer?

[HAWTREE looks at him — turns to fire. SAM disconcerted again. Sits]

GEORGE. To come back all the way from India to find that I'm dead, and that you're alive. To find my wife a widow with a new love aged — How old are you? I'll buy you a pony tomorrow, my brave little boy! What's his weight? I should say two pound nothing. My — baby — my boy! [Bends over him and kisses him] Take him away, Polly, for fear I should break him. [POLLY takes child, and places it in cradle]

HAWTREE [crosses to piano. Passes SAM, front — stares — business. SAM goes round to fireplace, flings down bread and butter in a rage and drinks his tea out of saucer] But tell us how it is you're back — how you escaped?

[HAWTREE leans against piano]

GEORGE [coming down]. By and by.

Too long a story just now. Tell about it. [POLLY gives him] How is it Esther's living here?

POLLY. She came back aft' baby was born, and the furnitu' sold up.

GEORGE. Sold up? What furni'

POLLY. That you bought for

HAWTREE. It couldn't be

George — Mrs. D'Alroy was so

GEORGE. Poor! But I left £600 to put in the bank!

HAWTREE. We must tell you gave it to her father, who banked his own name.

SAM. And lost it in bettin' — copper.

GEORGE. Then she's been in

POLLY. No — not in want. F lent her money.

GEORGE [seated]. What fr [Pause; he looks at POLLY, who in HAWTREE] You?

POLLY. Yes.

GEORGE [rising and shaking TREE's hand]. Thank you, old f

[HAWTREE droops hi

SAM. [Aside] Now who'd a th that long swell 'ad it in 'im? 'e mentioned it.

GEORGE. So Papa Eccles ha money?

SAM. And blued it. [Sitting

[Sits on corner of

POLLY [pleadingly]. You see was very unlucky on the race-c He told us that if it hadn't bee all his calculations were upset horse winning who had no busin he should have made our for Father's been unlucky, and he tipsy at times, but he's a very man, if you only give him scope en

SAM. I'd give 'im scope enoug

GEORGE. Where is he now?

SAM. Public-house.

GEORGE. And how is he?

SAM. Drunk!

[POLLY pushes him off

SAM sits at fireplace up s

GEORGE. [To HAWTREE] You right. There is "something" in [Aloud] But tell us all about it.

POLLY. Well, you know, you away; and then the baby was Oh! he was such a sweet little just like — your eyes — your hair

[Standing by GEORGE, who ting]

GEORGE. Cut that!

POLLY. Well, baby came; and

six days old, your letter came, [to HAWTREE]. I saw that it was dia, and that it wasn't in your [GEORGE]; I guessed what was so, so I opened it unknown to her, read there of your capture and I daren't tell her. I went to ask his advice, but he was too understand me. Sam fetched for. He told us that the news till her. When she woke up, she had dreamt there was a com you. I told her, No; and yer day she asked for a letter. Doctor advised us to write one came from you. So we did. I and the doctor told her — ther, I mean — that her eyes d and she mustn't read, and we letter to her; didn't we, Sam? ess you! she always knew it come from you! At last, when stronger, we told her all. GE [after a pause]. How did it?

She pressed the baby in s, and turned her face to the [A pause] Well, to make a ry short, when she got up, she ather had lost all the money left her. There was a dreadful tween them. She told him he'd er and her child, and father left se, and swore he'd never come ain.

Don't be alarmed, — 'e did ck. [Sitting by fire]

Oh, yes; he was too good-to stop long from his children. his faults, but his good points, u find 'em, are wonderful!

Yes, when you find 'em. Rises, gets bread and butter from table, and sits at corner of table] So she had to come back us, and that's all.

GE. Why didn't she write to aer?

Father wanted her; but she proud — she said she'd die

GE [rising, to HAWTREE]. There's n! Caste's all humbug. [Sees ver mantel-piece] That's my crossing round] and a map of and that's the piano I bought ll swear to the silk.

Yes; that was bought in at

GE. [To HAWTREE] Thank ye,

HAWTREE. Not by me — I was in India at the time.

GEORGE. By whom, then?

POLLY. By Sam. [SAM winks to her to discontinue] I shall! He knew Esther was breaking her heart about anyone else having it, so he took the money he'd saved up for our wedding, and we're going to be married now — ain't we, Sam?

SAM [rushing to GEORGE and pulling out circulars from his pocket]. And hope by constant attention to business, to merit — [POLLY pushes him away]

POLLY. Since you died it hasn't been opened, but if I don't play it to-night, may I die an old maid!

[Goes up. GEORGE crosses to SAM, and shakes his hand, then goes up stage, pulls up blind, and looks into street. SAM turns up and meets POLLY by top of table]

HAWTREE. [Aside] Now who'd have thought that little cad had it in him? He never mentioned it. [Aloud] Apropos, George, your mother — I'll go to the Square, and tell her of —

[Takes hat from piano]

GEORGE. Is she in town?

[At cradle]

HAWTREE. Yes. Will you come with me?

GEORGE. And leave my wife? — and such a wife!

HAWTREE. I'll go at once. I shall catch her before dinner. Good-bye, old fellow. Seeing you back again, alive and well, makes me feel quite — that I quite feel — [Shakes GEORGE's hand. Goes to door, then crosses to SAM, who has turned POLLY's tea into his saucer, and is just about to drink; seeing HAWTREE, he puts it down quickly, and turns his back] Mr. Gerridge, I fear I have often made myself very offensive to you.

SAM. Well, sir, yer 'ave.

HAWTREE. [At bottom of table] I feared so. I didn't know you then. I beg your pardon. Let me ask you to shake hands — to forgive me, and forget it.

[Offering his hand]

SAM [taking it]. Say no more, sir; and if ever I've made myself offensive to you, I ask your pardon; forget it and forgive me. [They shake hands warmly; as HAWTREE crosses to door, recovering from SAM's hearty shake of the hand, SAM runs to him] Hi, sir! When yer marry that young lady as I know

you're engaged to, if you should furnish a house, and require anything in my way —

[*He brings out circular; begins to read it. POLLY comes down and pushes SAM away, against HAWTREE. SAM goes and sits on low chair by fireplace, down stage, disconcerted, cramming circulars into his pocket*]

HAWTREE. Good-bye, George, for the present. [At door] Bye, Polly. [Resumes his Pall Mall manner as he goes out] I'm off to the Square.

[Exit HAWTREE]

GEORGE [at cradle]. But Esther?

POLLY [meets GEORGE]. Oh, I forgot all about Esther. I'll tell her all about it.

GEORGE. How? [By door]

POLLY. I don't know; but it will come. Providence will send it to me, as it has sent you, my dear brother. [Embracing him] You don't know how glad I am to see you back again! You must go. [Pushing him. GEORGE takes hat off piano] Esther will be getting up directly. [At door with GEORGE, who looks through keyhole] It's no use looking there; it's dark.

GEORGE [at door]. It isn't often a man can see his own widow.

POLLY. And it isn't often that he wants to! Now, you must go.

[Pushing him off]

GEORGE. I shall stop outside.

SAM. And I'll whistle for you when you may come in.

POLLY. Now — hush!

GEORGE [opening door wide]. Oh, my Esther, when you know I'm alive! I'll marry you all over again, and we'll have a second honeymoon, my darling.

[Exit]

POLLY. Oh, Sam, Sam! [Commencing to sing and dance. SAM also dances; they meet in centre of stage, join hands, and dance around two or three times, leaving SAM on the left of POLLY, near table. POLLY going down] Oh, Sam, I'm so excited, I don't know what to do. What shall I do — what shall I do?

SAM [taking up HAWTREE's bread and butter]. 'Ave a bit of bread and butter, Polly.

POLLY. Now, Sam, light the gas; I'm going to wake her up. [Opening door] Oh, my darling, if I dare tell you! [Whispering] He's come back! He's alive! He's come back! He's

come back! Alive! Alive! Sam, kiss me!

[SAM rushes to POLLY, kisses her, and she jumps off, SAM slams the door]

SAM [dances shutter-dance]. I! the swells are gone; now I can open the safety-valve, and let my feelings out. To think of 'is comin' back alive! India just as I am goin' to open the shop. Perhaps he'll get me the coronation of the Royal Family. It looks stunnin' over the door, a li'l like a unicorn, a-standin' on their hind legs, doin' nothin' furiously, with a look between 'em — thus. [Seizes picture of the Royal Family on table, puts his left foot on chair back, and imitates the picture of the Royal Family] Polly said I was to light up, and ever Polly says must be done. [Seizes brackets over mantel-piece, then crouches as he lights the broken one, saying] this one is for all the world like Eccles! [Places candles on piano, sits on music-stool] Poor Esther, I think of my knowin' her when she was in the ballet line, — then in the operable line; then a mother — no doubt ourables is "mammias", — then a dancer, and then in the ballet line again, and 'im to come back [growing a little] — and find a baby, with all 'is furniture and fittin's ready for immediate use [crossing back of table during last line, sits in chair left of table] she, poor thing, lyin' asleep with her eye-lids 'ot and swollen, not knowing that that great big, 'eavy, 'ulkin' grown dragoon is prowlin' outside, ready to fly at 'er lips, and strangle 'er with his strong, lovin' arms — it — it — it —

[Breaks down and sobs, with head on the table]

[Enter POLLY]

POLLY. Why, Sam! What's the matter?

SAM [rises and crosses]. I've got the water's got into my meter.

POLLY. Hush! Here's Esther.

[Enter ESTHER. They stop surprised. POLLY down stage]

SAM [singing and dancing]. "Ti-tum," etc.

ESTHER [sitting near fire, taking costume and beginning to work]. You seem in high spirits to-night.

SAM. Yes; yer see Polly and I are goin' to be married — and — and —

owing a merit — to continue the
 [who has kissed ESTHER two or
 mes]. What are you talking

I don't know, — I'm off my

Brings music-stool. POLLY goes
 round to chair, facing ESTHER]
 ER. What's the matter with
 night, dear? [To POLLY] I can
 ething in your eyes.

P'raps it's the new furniture!
 [Sits on music-stool]

ER. Will you help me with the
 olly?

They sit, ESTHER upper end, back
 of table, POLLY facing her, at
 lower end]

ER. It was a pretty dress when
 ew — not unlike the one Mdle.
 e used to wear. [Suddenly
 her hands] Oh!

ER. What's the matter?

ER. A needle! [Crosses to SAM,
 mines finger] I've got it!

What — the needle — in your

ER. No; an idea in my head!
 still looking at her finger]. Does

ER. Stupid! [SAM still sitting on
 Aloud] Do you recollect Mdle.
 e, Esther?

ER. Yes.

ER. Do you recollect her in that
 hat old Herr Griffenhaagen ar-
 — Jeanne la Folle, or, the
 of the Soldier?

ER. Yes; will you do the fresh

ER. What's the use? Let me
 ow did it go? How well I re-
 the scene! — the cottage was
 side, the bridge at the back —
 let of villagers, and the entrance
 phine as Jeanne, the bride —
 ala-lala-la-la [sings and panto-
 SAM imitating her]. Then the
 e of Claude, the bridegroom —
 x, imitating swell] How-de-do?
 do?

rising]. 'Ow are yer?

Imitating POLLY, then sitting
 again]

ER. Then there was the proces-
 church — the march of the
 over the bridge — [sings and
 mes] — arrest of Claude, who is
 or the conscription — [business;
 looks dreamily], and is torn from

the arms of his bride, at the church-
 porch. Omnes broken-hearted. This is
 Omnes broken-hearted. [Pantomimes]

ESTHER. Polly, I don't like this;
 it brings back memories.

POLLY [going to table and leaning her
 hands on it. Looks over at ESTHER] Oh,
 fuss about memories! — one can't mourn
 for ever. [ESTHER surprised] Every-
 thing in this world isn't sad. There's
 bad news — and there's good news
 sometimes — when we least expect it.

ESTHER. Ah! not for me.

POLLY. Why not?

ESTHER [anxiously]. Polly!

POLLY. Second Act. [This to be said
 quickly, startling SAM, who has been look-
 ing on the ground during last four or five
 lines] Winter — the Village Pump.
 This is the village pump [pointing to
 SAM, seated by piano, on music-stool;
 SAM turns round on music-stool, disgusted]
 Entrance of Jeanne — now called Jeanne
 la Folle, because she has gone mad on
 account of the supposed loss of her
 husband.

SAM. The supposed loss?

POLLY. The supposed loss!

ESTHER [dropping costume]. Polly!

SAM. [Aside to POLLY] Mind!

POLLY. Can't stop now! Entrance
 of Claude, who isn't dead, in a captain's
 uniform — a cloak thrown over his
 shoulders.

ESTHER. Not dead!

POLLY. Don't you remember the
 ballet? Jeanne is mad, and can't
 recognise her husband; and don't, till
 he shows her the ribbon she gave him
 when they were betrothed. A bit of
 ribbon! Sam, have you got a bit of
 ribbon? Oh, that crape sword-knot,
 that will do.

[Crosses down. SAM astonished]

ESTHER. Touch that!

[Rising, coming down]

POLLY. Why not? — it's no use
 now.

ESTHER [slowly, looking into POLLY's
 eyes]. You have heard of George — I
 know you have — I see it in your eyes.
 You may tell me — I can bear it — I
 can indeed — indeed I can. Tell me —
 he is not dead? [Violently agitated]

POLLY. No!

ESTHER. No?

POLLY. No!

ESTHER [whispers]. Thank Heaven!
 [SAM turns on stool, back to audience]
 You've seen him, — I see you have! —
 I know it! — I feel it! I had a bright

and happy dream—I saw him as I slept! Oh, let me know if he is near! Give me some sign—some sound—[POLLY opens piano]—some token of his life and presence!

[SAM touches POLLY on the shoulder, takes hat, and exit. All to be done very quickly. POLLY sits immediately at piano and plays air softly—the same air played by ESTHER, Act II, on the treble only]

ESTHER [in an ecstasy]. Oh, my husband! come to me! for I know that you are near! Let me feel your arms clasp round me! Do not fear for me!—I can bear the sight of you!—[door opens showing SAM keeping GEORGE back]—it will not kill me!—George—love! husband—come, oh, come to me!

[GEORGE breaks away from SAM, and coming down behind ESTHER places his hands over her eyes; she gives a faint scream, and turning, falls in his arms. POLLY plays bass as well as treble of the air, forte, then fortissimo. She then plays at random, endeavouring to hide her tears. At last strikes piano wildly, and goes off into a fit of hysterical laughter, to the alarm of SAM, who, rushing down as POLLY cries "Sam! Sam!" falls on his knees in front of her. They embrace, POLLY pushing him contemptuously away afterwards. GEORGE gets chair, sits, and ESTHER kneels at his feet—he snatches off ESTHER's cap, and throws it up stage. POLLY goes left of GEORGE, SAM brings music-stool, and she sits]

ESTHER. To see you here again—to feel your warm breath upon my cheek—is it real, or am I dreaming?

SAM [rubbing his head]. No; it's real.

ESTHER [embracing GEORGE]. My darling!

SAM. My darling! [POLLY on music-stool, which SAM has placed for her. SAM, kneeling by her, imitates ESTHER—POLLY scornfully pushes him away] But tell us—tell us how you escaped.

GEORGE. It's a long story, but I'll condense it. I was riding out, and suddenly found myself surrounded and taken prisoner. One of the troop that took me was a fella who had been my servant, and to whom I had done some

little kindness. He helped me escape, and hid me in a sort of cave for a long time used to bring me. Unfortunately, he was ordered so he brought another Sepoy to after me. I felt from the first that he meant to betray me, and I warned him like a lynx, during the one day he was with me. As evening drew on, a Sepoy picket was passing. I caught by the look in the fella's eyes, he was to call out as soon as they were near enough; so I seized him by the neck and shook the life out of him.

ESTHER. You strangled him?

GEORGE. Yes.

ESTHER. Killed him—dead?

GEORGE. He didn't get up again. [Embraces ESTHER]

POLLY. [To SAM] You never killed Sepoys. [Pushes him]

SAM. No! I pay rates and taxes.

GEORGE. The day after, HARRY and his Scotchmen marched through the village, and I turned out to meet them. I was too done up to join them. I was sent straight on to Calcutta, got leave, took a berth on the P. & O. boat; the passage restored me, and landed this morning, came on to the village and brought in the milk.

[Enter the MARQUISE; she rushes to embrace GEORGE. All rise, SAM turning stool back]

MARQUISE. My dear boy, dear, dear boy!

POLLY. Why, see, she's so glad. She's glad to see him alive and again.

SAM [profoundly]. Well! They say some good in women, even when they're ladies.

[Goes up to window. POLLY dresses in box, and goes to the door, then beside SAM]

MARQUISE [crossing to ESTHER]. My dear daughter, we must forget our differences. [Kissing her] Won't you? How history repeats itself! You find a similar and as unexpected turn mentioned by Froissart in the chapter that treats of Philip Dart.

GEORGE. Yes, mother—I remember—[Kisses her]

MARQUISE. [To GEORGE, aside] You must take her abroad, and make her lady of her.

GEORGE. Can't, mamma;—it's ready-made. Nature has done it all in our hands.

QUISE. [*Aside to GEORGE*] But I have the man who smells of — [SAM, *business at back. He is g, and at the word "putty" throws irritably on table.* POLLY pacifies and makes him sit down beside her dow] — nor the man who smells

Goes to ESTHER, who offers her chair, and sits in chair opposite to her. MARQUISE back to audience, ESTHER facing audience]

[*Enter HAWTREE, pale*]

TREE. George! Oh, the Marquis is here.

GEORGE. What's the matter?

TREE. Oh, nothing. Yes, there don't mind telling you. I've brought down. I called at my chambers and found this.

[*Gives GEORGE a note. Sits on music-stool*]

GEORGE. From the Countess, Lady Marquis's mother. [*Reads*] "Dear Mr. Hawtree, — I hasten to inform you that my daughter Florence is about to enter into an alliance with Lord Marquis, the eldest son of the Marquis of Hampshire. Under these circumstances, should you think fit to call on me, I feel assured —" Well, that's it's for the best. [*Returning to Caste! you know. Caste! the marquis is a bigger swell than a*

TREE. Yes, best to marry in your own rank of life.

GEORGE. If you can find the girl. Ever you find the girl, marry her. Her station, —

Two hearts are more than coronets,
Simple faith than Norman blood."

TREE. Ya-as. But a gentleman should hardly ally himself to a

GEORGE. My dear fella, Nobody's a gentleman — he don't exist. Nobody's a lady! Everybody's somebody!

TREE. Yes. But still — Caste.

GEORGE. Oh, Caste's all right. Caste's a good thing if it's not carried too far. It shuts the door on the pretentious and the vulgar; but it should open the way wide for exceptional merit. It rains break through its barriers, but brains can break through and leap over.

TREE. Yes. Why, George,

you're quite inspired — quite an orator. What makes you so brilliant? Your captivity? The voyage? What then?

GEORGE. I'm in love with my wife!

[*Enter ECCLES, drunk, a bottle of gin in his hand*]

ECCLES [*crossing to centre of stage*]. Bless this 'appy company. May we 'ave in our arms what we love in our hearts. [*Goes to head of table.* ESTHER goes to cradle, back to audience. POLLY and SAM, half amused, half angry. MARQUISE still sitting in chair, back to audience. HAWTREE facing ECCLES. GEORGE up stage, leaning on piano in disgust] Polly, fetch wine-glasses — a tumbler will do for me. Let us drink a toast. Mr. Chairman [*to MARQUISE*], ladies and gentlemen, — I beg to propose the 'ealth of our newly returned warrior, my son-in-law. [*MARQUISE shivers*] The Right Honourable George De Alroy. Get glasses, Polly, and send for a bottle of sherry wine for my ladyship. My ladyship! My ladyship! My lad'ship! [*See half turns to him*] You and me'll have a drain together on the quiet. So delighted to see you under these altered circum — circum — circum — stangate.

[*POLLY, who has shaken her head at him to desist, in vain, very distressed*]

SAM. Shove 'is 'ead in a bucket!

[*Exit in disgust*]

HAWTREE. [*Aside to GEORGE*] I think I can abate this nuisance — at least, I can remove it.

[*Rises and crosses to ECCLES, who has got round to side of table, leaning on it. He taps ECCLES with his stick, first on right shoulder, then on left, and finally sharply on right. ECCLES turns round and falls on point of stick — HAWTREE steadying him. GEORGE crosses behind, to MARQUISE, who has gone to cradle — puts his arm round ESTHER and takes her to mantel-piece*]

Mr. Eccles, don't you think that, with your talent for liquor, if you had an allowance of about two pounds a week, and went to Jersey, where spirits are cheap, that you could drink yourself to death in a year?

ECCLES. I think I could — I'm sure I'll try.

[Goes up by table, steadying himself by it, and sits in chair by fire, with the bottle of gin. HAWTREE standing by fire. ESTHER and POLLY embracing. As they turn away from each other —]

GEORGE [coming across with ESTHER]. Come and play me that air that used to ring in my ears as I lay awake, night after night, captive in the cave — you know.

[He hands ESTHER to piano. She plays the air]

MARQUISE [bending over cradle, a My grandson!

[ECCLES falls off the chair, last stage of drunkenness, in hand. HAWTREE, with one foot on chair from ECCLES has fallen, looks through eye-glass. SAM and goes to POLLY, behind and, producing wedding from several papers, holds before her eyes. ESTHER until curtain drops]

H. M. S. PINAFORE

(1878)

By W. S. GILBERT

WILLIAM SCHWENCK GILBERT

(1836-1911)

One comes away from a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera full of zest, and with a sense of having been splendidly amused. A rare breeze blows across their stage in a mixture of melody and wit, putting to shame our worn-out modern musical comedies. In stage history, we know of nothing to compare with the partnership of these two men. After their names became inseparable — in other words, after the first operas, which began in 1875, with "Trial by Jury" — Gilbert and Sullivan parted through disagreement. But neither one profited by the break; though reunited later, their other work never equalled or even approached "H. M. S. Pinafore", "The Pirates of Penzance", and "Patience."

The last revival of "Pinafore" in America was given shortly after the death of Gilbert, which occurred on May 29, 1911, when he met with a tragic end by falling into a lake on his estate. At that time the news was heralded with almost spontaneous poignancy, even though the librettist was born in 1836, and had been long being an active influence in the theatre. What is to be noted is that these two men produced some of the most musical and satirical commentaries on current events and fancies, and that no one has yet been able to approach them in their comparability. Since Sullivan's death, in 1900, there has been no one to caricature opera scores, as he did in the "The Mikado" and "Pinafore"; and no one has equalled the libretto style of Gilbert.

The latter began as a serious dramatist, coming under the influence of Tom Taylor — an influence which he confesses, and which may well be seen in the over-blown plan for the plot of "Pinafore." Gilbert tried his hand at tenderness in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice", at sentiment in "Sweethearts", and at straight drama in "Dan'l Martin" and "The Pirates of Penzance". By literary nature he was whimsical. And by business nature, he was practical. Stage experience prompted him to desert the serious. He did so even in these very terse terms:

"You are in error in supposing that the adverse criticisms of "Bramblingham" alone determined me to write no more serious plays. This is my sixth executive failure in that class of work, and I simply bow to what I take to be the verdict of the press and the public.

No one has facetiously said, Shakespeare wrote the quotation book. Certainly the lyrics in the Gilbert librettos are well-nigh as familiar in quotation as the universal application of some of the Gilbert satire makes his best pieces as applicable to-day as they were when written. There is a theatrical superstition that "theatricality" is not easy to revive. Managers argue that because the intellectual in it put the audience in an uncomfortable position about human weaknesses, it leaves a bitter taste to carry away. It may also be that, historically, the theatre presupposes some knowledge of the literary dissembling which drew upon

many English writers the satiric shafts of Gilbert and of George Du Maurier. if the esthete was a sham in 1881, when "Patience" was first given at the Lo Opéra Comique, on the evening of April 23, he is certainly a sham to-day. If there were pre-Raphaelites in 1881, there are Futurists and "high-brows" to-day. Gilbert was probably right in banking on the belief that though "types disappear with every decade, the long-haired poet will never cut his locks, and the adoring disciple will never cease to adore."

A common accusation is that Gilbert and Sullivan, in their successful collaborative careers, slavishly followed their old themes rather than invented original plots and situations. There is certainly a conventional pattern for "Pinafore" and "Patience"; one is always on the lookout for the set lyrics, which are the "gilbertisms" in Gilbert and Sullivan. But the beauty about Gilbert's lyrics, so unlike the general scheme of the modern musical comedy, is that they have an organic connection with the plot as a whole.

Gilbert was born on the Strand, London, November 18, 1836. When only three years old, he was stolen by brigands at Naples, where his parents were staying at the time. During the very earliest period of his education, he showed a gift for drawing and for writing, and when, in 1855, he entered King's College, having as his fellow-students the late Walter Besant and Alfred Ainger, editor of *Chamberlain's Letters*, he began writing for the college magazine. It was his intention to go to Oxford, but the Crimean War occurring, he stood his examinations for the Royal Artillery Commission. The war came to a quick end, however, and in 1857, after his graduation from London University, in 1857, that he obtained a commission in the Third Battalion of Gordon Highlanders. That same year he became a clerk in the Education Department, and, during his spare time, studied for the bar, which he entered in 1863. For the *Cornhill Magazine* of that year he wrote his most amusing article on "My Maiden Brief." He had already appeared in *Fun*, having translated a laughing song from Auber's "Manon Lescaut." He had begun writing articles and drawing pictures for *Fun*, which was edited by John Byron. Those who wish to determine the art ability of Gilbert at this time will find eighty-four illustrations prepared for a novel written by his father, and titled "The Magic Mirror." There is no telling how many columns of sheet music were shot through with sound criticism of drama and art, and mostly unsigned, are the pen of Gilbert, who contributed to the *Cornhill*, *London Society*, *Tinsleys*, *Illustrated Times*, *Temple Bar*, and *Punch*.

The first of the illustrated "Bab Ballads" was published in *Fun* on June 1, 1869, and they became a regular feature until January 23, 1869, when we find the title "Bab Ballads" — used for the first time. Critics recognized in the verses of Gilbert that whimsy and vivacity which marked his special humour. On Christmas 1866, he presented a burlesque of the opera, "L'Elixir d'Amore", which he titled "Dulcamara; or, The Little Duck and the Great Quack", and thereafter a long series of travesties followed in quick succession. They were almost an annual event. Between 1869 and 1872 he wrote some sketches, accompanied by music by Frederick Clay, for the German Reeds, among these attempts "Ages Ago", afterwards utilized in "Ruddigore." Not until 1871 was Gilbert introduced to Sullivan by the Reeds, and never was a meeting more propitious. Soon afterwards, the two were hard at work on what was to be the beginning of their fortune for both. Gilbert's career was one continued succession of production. Oftentimes, in one year, he would produce at least four of his pieces. We find

one, "Randall's Thumb", "Creatures of Impulse", "Great Expectations", "Guard", "The Wedding March", "Thespis; or, The Gods Grown Old," "Pygmalion and Galatea" attracting the London public. Out of the latter it is said to have reaped a fortune of over \$200,000. In 1874, the London was shocked by the supposed immorality of "Charity", and pleased by "Hearts", which Mrs. Bancroft was giving at the Prince of Wales's. From the time Gilbert and Sullivan combined, beginning with "Trial by Jury", March 25, 1875, — the libretto based on a sketch for *Fun*, April 11, 1868, — with D'Oyly Carte as the manager, until, in 1889, misunderstanding broke the partnership, they have in rapid succession "The Sorcerer" (November 17, 1877), "Pinafore" (December 25, 1878), "The Pirates of Penzance" (New York, December 31, 1879), "Iolanthe" (April 23, 1881), "The Mikado" (November 25, 1882), "Princess Ida", and Tennyson's "The Princess" (January 5, 1884), "The Gondoliers" (March 14, 1888), a production out of which it is said Gilbert, Sullivan, and D'Oyly Carte each received \$150,000, "Ruddigore" (January 22, 1887), "The Yeoman of the Guard" (December 3, 1888), "The Gondoliers" (December 7, 1889). This list includes the brilliant period of the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration. Each piece carried a great title.

The fact that "H. M. S. Pinafore" reminds one of a Bab Ballad recalls George Bernard Shaw's statement, in "Impressions and Opinions", that the "measure of his [Gilbert's] success has always been determined by the measure of his faithfulness to these impressions; and if we examine them, we find they contain in essence the whole of his perceptions." Although the production, as staged in London, ran for over a hundred consecutive nights, it was not at first the success it afterwards became. In fact, we are told it was because the music was so persistently played at the Covent Garden Promenade Concerts that people finally became curious regarding the opera. The international copyright law was still in a muddle, and the industry of English writers was within the grasp of every pirate in existence. Gilbert and Sullivan had difficulties with their American production of "Pinafore." In the United States, it was performed everywhere without permission; even amateur choirs, so we are told, gave productions of "Pinafore", and at one time at least eight rival companies were presenting it. Because of this lack of property rights, Gilbert and Sullivan decided to give an authentic production in America, and for that purpose came to New York in time to produce their opera at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, on December 1, 1879, Sullivan leading his orchestra. Strange to say, when the pirated edition was given on January 17, 1879, the metropolitan audience received it with greater cordiality, although, when the later authentic version was produced, they recognized that the music, as conducted by Sullivan, was better, and the scenic effects more elaborate.

Sullivan is reported to have said of his score:

It is perhaps a rather strange fact that the music to "Pinafore", which was thought to be so merry and spontaneous, was written while I was suffering from a cruel illness. I would compose a few bars, and then lie almost insensible from pain. When the paroxysm was passed, I would write a little more, until the pain overwhelmed me again. Never was music written under conditions so distressing.

Shaw tells us that the play was originally called "Mantelpiece", but that, as soon as "Her Majesty's Ship" was decided upon, Gilbert built an actual replica of

the boat. In fact, he possessed a complete model of the Savoy stage, and worked out his effects, not only while writing his play, but during rehearsals. When he was conducting rehearsals, his business was so well planned out that there was no need to waste time inventing movement and action; it had all been sketched out beforehand on the little model stage in his study. The slightest suggestions set his very rich imagination at work. For instance, it is believed that a huge cut-throat razor, which hung in his library, was the beginning of a series of notions that finally crystallized into "The Mikado."

It would be interesting to follow the transformation which took place in the renaming of the "Mantelpiece", and the launching of "H. M. S. Pinafore." In his rather discursive account of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, Sullivan tells something of the changes. He notes that the *Hon. Sir Joseph Porter* was given a distinguished group of "sisters and cousins and aunts", but that in the *Bab Ballad* they belonged to *Captain Reese*.

Attending a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, and listening to revelry of tune and bright music, one can hardly believe that the composer of such melodies was the writer of the world-famous "Onward, Christian Soldiers", "Nearer My God To Thee", and "The Lost Chord."

In George W. Smalley's "Anglo-American Reminiscences", there is an excellent pen-picture of the irritability of W. S. Gilbert. We learn from a first-hand view what a tyro he was at rehearsals. We are given to understand that he was one of the touchiest men, resenting the slightest unfavourable allusion to his work. This portraiture makes us believe that had any one but himself written such a mild bit of fun as this, in the "Pirates of Penzance" — "And whistled the airs from that infernal nonsense 'Pinafore'", — Gilbert would have cut off forever from his friendship. "The Pirates", strange to say, was first given in New York, D'Oyly Carte having his company in America for "Pinafore."

The reason "Patience" has appealed to so many, above "The Pirates", is that the era of esthetic shams is not over, whereas the days of pirates are no more save in the industrial world! Hence, in this instance, comic opera becomes drama rather than satire, and the plot seems forced rather than natural. Beethoven's music score for "The Pirates" is pretentious, and, therefore, not so easily carried in the memory. There are more vocal pyrotechnics in "The Pirates" whereas "Patience" has simple, bright, rapid, and melodic lyrics.

The Gilbert and Sullivan formula is easily recognized after one has seen a number of Gilbert and Sullivan operas in succession. Their excellencies are mannerism, but they are none the less effective. One "hums" through the world-famous "I polka up the handle so carefully That now I am the ruler of the Queen's Navy" from *Captain Corcoran's* "I sail the ocean blue"; or *Dick Deadeye's* "Captain Corcoran's important information," and the sentimental sweetness of "I'm called Buttercup."

These are all classics in their special lines. The mind conjures up the policeman's plaintive wail, "Oh, take one consideration with another (with another) a policeman's lot is not a happy one (happy one)." "Patience" is equally rich in its songs. Do you not remember, "If you are eager for to shine in the esthetic line as a man of culture rare"?

The first act of "Patience" rolls from one excellence to another, and at the end while you are made to feel that, somewhere, Gilbert is burlesquing the Swinburn

as having fun with his own love for Shelley. No jingles to-day can quite equal the lyric quality, with the appositeness, to be found in "When I first put uniform on," and *Bunthorne's* "Come, walk up and purchase with avidity, come your diffidence and natural timidity." And there is an abiding tenderness in the duet, "Prithee, pretty maiden, prithee tell me true."

In a story, "Patience" is thin. But its satirical spirit constitutes its unity. The esthete is hounded from first to last. In such lyrics as "A magnet hung in the jeweller's shop", "To him with compliments ironical", "You hold yourself like a magnet", "And when I go out the door", the esthete is given no peace.

There are those who believe "The Mikado" is Gilbert and Sullivan's best composition. Certain it is that the little operetta almost became a *cause célèbre*, creating embarrassment in her Majesty's, Queen Victoria's, royal circle. In 1857, the Emperor had sent the Emperor of Japan a battleship as a gift. And the Japanese, for the first time, had come in contact with Western civilization by sending some of their officials to London. Gilbert's satirical burlesque of the Japanese, who were the Emperor's official visitors, met at first with scant royal favour.

The acting history of Gilbert's earlier plays is mostly centred in the early efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, who presented his "The Palace of Truth", based on the story by Madame De Genlis; "Pygmalion and Galatea", in which Mrs. Kendal played the rôle of *Galatea*, originally intended for Mary Anderson, — and afterwards played by her. In the "Memories" of the latter, one finds the following, showing how difficult Gilbert could be at rehearsals. She writes as follows:

During the rehearsals of the former ["Pygmalion and Galatea"] I was frequently told that my reading of the character would not be tolerated by the London public. Galatea, the child of Pygmalion's art, a statue, come to life, did not, it seemed to me, think, look, stand, or speak like an earthly-born maiden; some remnant of the inanimate marble would inevitably linger about her, giving to her movements a plastic grace, and to her thoughts and their expression a touch of the ethereal. Mr. Gilbert did not agree with my conception of the classic meaning of Galatea's character — which seemed to me its strongest and most effective side — saying that the play was a nineteenth-century comedy dressed in Greek costume, "which," he added, "is the only realistic thing about it." I had undertaken the part on condition that I should play it according to my own ideas; and painful and embarrassing as it was for me not to be versatile enough to carry out the brilliant author's wish that Galatea should speak certain comic speeches with a visible consciousness of their artificiality, I felt convinced that my only hope of success was to stamp every word, look, tone, and movement with that ingenuousness which seemed to me the key-note of her nature. Another trouble during the dress rehearsals was my appearance for the statue. My friend, Mr. Alma-Tadema, had suggested that I should be draped after some of those lovely Tanagra figurines; and he was good enough to arrange my draperies himself, going with Mr. Gilbert into the stalls to see the effect. The author insisted that Galatea looked like a stiff mediæval statue; so the Tanagra idea was abandoned. At the last full-dress rehearsal the criticisms grew worse. Pose after pose was tried, but the judges in front had something to say against each. I went to my dressing-room on the eventful night of the first performance; but, dashing them aside, I resolved to make my own statue in my own way. Though it was already six o'clock, my mother bought and hastily made

the drapery which was necessary for the new effect. In my white G clothes, with swollen eyes and tear-stained face, I worked for an hour before long mirror, when suddenly the statue that I wanted stood before me. The audience received it with round after round of applause, and Mr. Gilbert acknowledged himself satisfied with his new Galatea. This success I thought was deserved not for any excellence on my part, but because of the suffering I had undergone during the many rehearsals.

Clement Scott claimed that Gilbert had the trenchant humour of Dean Jerrold, and the topsy-turviness and comic genius of Dean Swift. It would have been strange had Gilbert, who was so continually a part of the atmosphere out of which *Fun* and *Punch* were created, escaped such a comparison. He was distinctly of his period, distinctly prone to allow his humour to play with the limitations of the Victorian era. Because of that, he is one of the signs of the Victorian times. And his attitude toward the stage and toward his art is marked by how much a part of the theatre of his day he was. There has been preservation, in Professor Brander Matthews's publications for the Dramatic Museum at Columbia University, an interesting paper by Gilbert, entitled "The Stage and the Actor," which is prefaced by Archer, who points out how Gilbert's idea of dramaturgy was governed by the requirements of his time. As this critic says, Gilbert's chief successes among his plays had been written for the Haymarket company, under Johnston's management, and had to deal with the stage conventions of 1872. His essay originally appeared in "Tom Hood's Comic Annual" for 1873.

If Gilbert held to the theory of isolated bright lines, a theory which was to be a failing of Oscar Wilde, he sufficiently overcame his belief in that theory to make the bright lines which scintillate through his librettos a very inherent part of the play.

H. M. S. PINAFORE;

OR,

THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR

AN ENTIRELY ORIGINAL NAUTICAL COMIC OPERA
IN TWO ACTS

By W. S. GILBERT

[First produced at the Opéra Comique Theatre, by Mr. R. D'Oyly Carte, on
Saturday, May, 25, 1878.]

CAST OF THE LONDON PRODUCTION OF "PINAFORE"

Opéra Comique
May 25, 1879

THE RT. HON. SIR JOSEPH

PORTER, K. C. B. . . .	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty . . .</i>	Mr. George Gro
CAPT. CORCORAN	<i>Commanding H. M. S. Pinafore</i>	Mr. R. Barring
RALPH RACKSTRAW	<i>Able Seaman</i>	Mr. George Pov
DICK DEADEYE	<i>Able Seaman</i>	Mr. R. Temple
BILL BOBSTAY	<i>Boatswain's Mate</i>	Mr. F. Clifton
BOB BECKET	<i>Carpenter's Mate</i>	Mr. Dymott
TOM TUCKER	<i>Midshipmite</i>	_____
SERGEANT OF MARINES		_____
JOSEPHINE	<i>The Captain's Daughter</i>	Miss Emma Ho
HEBE	<i>Sir Joseph's First Cousin . . .</i>	Miss Jessie Bon
LITTLE BUTTERCUP	<i>A Portsmouth Bumboat Woman</i>	Miss Everard
FIRST LORD'S SISTERS, HIS COUSINS, HIS AUNTS, SAILORS, MARINES		

SCENE: *Quarter-deck of H. M. S. Pinafore off Portsmouth*

Act I. — Noon

Act II. — Night

CASTS OF THE TWO AMERICAN PRODUCTIONS

	PIRATED	AUTHENTIC
	<i>The Standard Theatre, New York, January 17, 1879. Under John Duff</i>	<i>The Fifth Avenue Theat New York, Decem 1879. Sullivan, L of Orchestra</i>
SIR JOSEPH PORTER	Mr. Thomas Whiffen	Mr. J. H. Ryl
CAPT. CORCORAN	Mr. Eugene Clarke	Mr. Brocolin
RALPH RACKSTRAW	Mr. Henri Laurent	Mr. Talbot
DICK DEADEYE	Mr. Davidge	Mr. Furneaux Coo
BOATSWAIN	Mr. Mackin	Mr. Clifton
JOSEPHINE	Miss Eva Mills	Miss Blanche Roos
COUSIN HEBE	Mlle. Jarbeau	Miss Jessie Bond
LITTLE BUTTERCUP	Miss Blanche Galton	Miss Alice Barnett

H. M. S. PINAFORE;

OR,

THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR

ACT I

Scene. — Quarter-deck of H. M. S. Pinafore. View of Portsmouth in distance. SAILORS, led by BOATSWAIN, discovered cleaning brasswork, splicing rope, etc.

CHORUS

Oh the ocean blue,
And our saucy ship's a beauty;
Sober men, and true,
And attentive to our duty.
The balls whistle free o'er the
Right blue sea,
Stand to our guns all day;
At anchor we ride on the Ports-
mouth tide,
Have plenty of time to play.

*LITTLE BUTTERCUP, with large
basket on her arm]*

RECITATIVE

Men-o'-war's men — safeguards of
our nation,
Is an end, at last, of all privation;
We got your pay — spare all you
can afford
Welcome Little Buttercup on board.

ARIA

I'm called Little Buttercup, dear
Little Buttercup,
Though I could never tell why,
Still I'm called Buttercup, poor
Little Buttercup,
Meet Little Buttercup, I.
Snuff, and tobaccy, and excellent
Tackey;
The scissors, and watches, and knives;
Ribbons and laces to set off the faces
Of pretty young sweethearts and
Lasses.

I've treacle and toffee and excellent
coffee,

Soft Tommy and succulent chops;
I've chickens and conies and pretty
polonies,

And excellent peppermint drops.
Then buy of your Buttercup — dear
Little Buttercup,

Sailors should never be shy;
So buy of your Buttercup — poor Little
Buttercup,

Come, of your Buttercup buy!

BOATSWAIN. Ay, Little Buttercup —
and well called — for you're the rosiest,
the roundest, and the reddest beauty
in all Spithead.

BUTTERCUP. Red, am I? and round
— and rosy! Maybe, for I have dis-
sembled well! But hark ye, my merry
friend — hast ever thought that be-
neath a gay and frivolous exterior there
may lurk a cankerworm which is slowly
but surely eating its way into one's
very heart?

BOATSWAIN. No, my lass, I can't
say I've ever thought that.

*[Enter DICK DEADEYE. He pushes
through SAILORS]*

DICK. I have thought it often.

[All recoil from him]

BUTTERCUP. Yes, you look like it!
What's the matter with the man?
Isn't he well?

BOATSWAIN. Don't take no heed of
him; that's only poor Dick Deadeye.

DICK. I say — it's a beast of a
name, ain't it — Dick Deadeye?

BUTTERCUP. It's not a nice name.

DICK. I'm ugly too, ain't I?

BUTTERCUP. You are certainly plain.

DICK. And I'm three-cornered too,
ain't I?

BUTTERCUP. You are rather triangular.

DICK. Ha! ha! That's it. I'm ugly, and they hate me for it; for you all hate me, don't you?

BOATSWAIN [*crossing*]. Well, Dick, we wouldn't go for to hurt any fellow-creature's feelings, but you can't expect a chap with such a name as Dick Deadeye to be a popular character — now, can you?

DICK. No.

BOATSWAIN. It's asking too much, ain't it?

DICK. It is. From such a face and form as mine the noblest sentiments sound like the black utterances of a depraved imagination. It is human nature — I am resigned.

RECITATIVE

BUTTERCUP [*looking down hatchway*]. But, tell me — who's the youth whose faltering feet

With difficulty bear him on his course?

BOATSWAIN [*crossing*]. That is the smartest lad in all the fleet — Ralph Rackstraw!

BUTTERCUP. Ha! that name! Remorse! remorse!

[*Enter RALPH from hatchway*]

MADRIGAL. — RALPH

The nightingale
Loved the pale moon's bright ray,
And told his tale
In his own melodious way!
He sang "Ah, well-a-day!"

ALL. He sang "Ah, well-a-day!"

The lowly vale
For the mountain vainly sighed;
To his humble wail
The echoing hills replied.
They sang "Ah, well-a-day!"

ALL. They sang "Ah, well-a-day!"

RECITATIVE

I know the value of a kindly chorus,
But choruses yield little consolation,
When we have pain and trouble too
before us!

I love — and love, alas, above my
station!

BUTTERCUP [*Aside*].

He loves — and loves a lass above
station!

ALL [*Aside*].

Yes, yes, the lass is much above
station!

BALLAD. — RALPH

A maiden fair to see,
The pearl of minstrelsy,
A bud of blushing beauty;
For whom proud nobles sigh,
And with each other vie,
To do her menial's duty.

ALL. To do her menial's duty.

A suitor, lowly born,
With hopeless passion torn,
And poor beyond concealing,
Has dared for her to pine
At whose exalted shrine
A world of wealth is kneeling.

ALL. A world of wealth is kneeling.

Unlearnèd he in aught
Save that which love has taught
(For love had been his tutor)
Oh, pity, pity me —
Our captain's daughter she,
And I that lowly suitor!

ALL. And he that lowly suitor
[*Exit LITTLE BUTTERCUP*]

BOATSWAIN. Ah, my poor lad, you
climbed too high: our worthy captain
child won't have nothin' to say
poor chap like you. Will she, lad?

DICK. No, no, captain's daughter
don't marry foremast hands.

ALL [*recoiling from him*]. Shame!
shame!

BOATSWAIN [*crossing*]. Dick Deadeye,
eye, them sentiments o' yourn
disgrace to our common natur'.

RALPH. But it's a strange notion
that the daughter of a man who
from the quarter-deck may not
another who lays out on the fore-
arm. For a man is but a man, when
he hoists his flag at the mainmast
his slacks on the maindeck.

DICK. Ah, it's a queer world!

RALPH. Dick Deadeye, I have
desire to press hardly on you, but
a revolutionary sentiment is en-
to make an honest sailor shudder.

BOATSWAIN [*who has gone on to
deck, returns*]. My lads, our
captain has come on deck; let us

so brave an officer and so gallant
man deserves.

RECITATIVE

CAPTAIN.
Gallant crew, good morning.
[saluting]. Sir, good morning!

CAPTAIN.
You're all well.
[as before].
Well; and you, sir?

CAPTAIN.
Reasonable in health, and happy
to meet you all once more.
[as before]. You do us proud, sir!

SONG. — CAPTAIN

CAPTAIN.
The Captain of the Pinafore!

Right good captain, too!

CAPTAIN.
I'm very, very good,
and be it understood
I command a right good crew.

Very, very good,
be it understood
I command a right good crew.

CAPTAIN.
Though related to a peer,
Hand, reef, and steer,
I ship a selvegee;
Never known to quail
At the fury of a gale,
I'm never, never sick at sea!
What, never?

CAPTAIN.
No, never!
What, never?

CAPTAIN.
Hardly ever!

Never hardly ever sick at sea!
I give three cheers, and one cheer
more,
For the hardy Captain of the Pinafore!

CAPTAIN.
My best to satisfy you all —

With you we're quite content.

CAPTAIN.
I'm exceedingly polite,
and I think it only right
to turn the compliment.

I'm exceedingly polite,
and he thinks it's only right
to turn the compliment.

CAPTAIN.
Bad language or abuse,
I never, never use,
Whatever the emergency;
Though, "bother it", I may
Occasionally say,
I never use a big, big D——
ALL. What, never?
CAPTAIN. No, never!
ALL. What, never?
CAPTAIN. Hardly ever!

ALL.
Hardly ever swears a big, big D——
Then give three cheers, and one cheer
more,
For the well-bred Captain of the Pinafore!

[After song exeunt all but CAPTAIN]

[Enter LITTLE BUTTERCUP]

RECITATIVE

BUTTERCUP.
Sir, you are sad. The silent eloquence
Of yonder tear that trembles on your
eyelash
Proclaims a sorrow far more deep than
common;
Confide in me — fear not — I am a
mother!

CAPTAIN.
Yes, Little Buttercup, I'm sad and
sorry —
My daughter, Josephine, the fairest
flower
That ever blossomed on ancestral tim-
ber,
Is sought in marriage by Sir Joseph
Porter,
Our Admiralty's First Lord, but for
some reason,
She does not seem to tackle kindly to it.

BUTTERCUP [with emotion].
Ah, poor Sir Joseph! Ah, I know too
well

The anguish of a heart that loves but
vainly!
But see, here comes your most attrac-
tive daughter.

I go — Farewell! [Exit]

CAPTAIN [looking after her].
A plump and pleasing person!

[Enter JOSEPHINE on poop. She comes
down, twining some flowers which
she carries in a small basket]

BALLAD. — JOSEPHINE

Sorry her lot who loves too well,
Heavy the heart that hopes but
vainly,

Sad are the sighs that own the spell
 Uttered by eyes that speak too plainly;
 Heavy the sorrow that bows the head
 When love is alive and hope is dead!
 Sad is the hour when sets the sun —
 Dark is the night to earth's poor daughters,
 When to the ark the wearied one
 Flies from the empty waste of waters!
 Heavy the sorrow that bows the head
 When love is alive and hope is dead!

CAPTAIN. My child, I grieve to see that you are a prey to melancholy. You should look your best to-day, for Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., will be here this afternoon to claim your promised hand.

JOSEPHINE. Ah, father, your words cut me to the quick. I can esteem — reverence — venerate Sir Joseph, for he is a great and good man; but oh, I cannot love him! My heart is already given.

CAPTAIN. [*Aside*] It is, then, as I feared. [*Aloud*] Given? And to whom? Not to some gilded lordling?

JOSEPHINE. No, father — the object of my love is no lordling. Oh, pity me, for he is but a humble sailor on board your own ship!

CAPTAIN. Impossible!

JOSEPHINE. Yes, it is true — too true.

CAPTAIN. A common sailor? Oh, fie!

JOSEPHINE. I blush for the weakness that allows me to cherish such a passion. I hate myself when I think of the depth to which I have stooped in permitting myself to think tenderly of one so ignobly born, but I love him! I love him! I love him! [*Weeps*]

CAPTAIN. Come, my child, let us talk this over. In a matter of the heart I would not coerce my daughter — I attach but little value to rank or wealth, but the line must be drawn somewhere. A man in that station may be brave and worthy, but at every step he would commit solecisms that society would never pardon.

JOSEPHINE. Oh, I have thought of this night and day. But fear not, father. I have a heart, and therefore I love; but I am your daughter, and therefore I am proud. Though I carry my love with me to the tomb, he shall never, never know it.

CAPTAIN. You *are* my daughter, after all. But see, Sir Joseph's approaches, manned by twelve oarsmen and accompanied by the miring crowd of female relatives attend him wherever he goes. Run my daughter, to your cabin — this, his photograph, with you may help to bring you to a more able frame of mind.

JOSEPHINE. My own thought
 father. [*Exit JOSEPH*]

BARCAROLLE [*without*]

Over the bright blue sea
 Comes Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B.
 Wherever he may go
 Bang-bang the loud nine-pounder
 Shout o'er the bright blue sea
 For Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B.

[*During this the CREW have entered tiptoe, listening attentively to the song*]

CHORUS OF SAILORS

We sail the ocean blue,
 And our saucy ship's a beauty
 We're sober men, and true,
 And attentive to our duty.
 We're smart and sober men,
 And quite devoid of fe-ar,
 In all the Royal N,
 None are so smart as we are.

[*Enter SIR JOSEPH's Female RELATIVES*
They dance round stage]

RELATIVES.

Gaily tripping,
 Lightly skipping,
 Flock the maidens to the shipping
 SAILORS.

Flags and guns and pennants di
 All the ladies love the shipping.

RELATIVES.

Sailors sprightly
 Always rightly
 Welcome ladies so politely.

SAILORS.

Ladies who can smile so brightly
 Sailors welcome most politely.

[*Enter SIR JOSEPH with COUSIN H*]

CAPTAIN [*from poop*].
 Now give three cheers, I'll lead the
 ALL.
 Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!
 [*R*]

SONG. — SIR JOSEPH

I am the monarch of the sea,
The Ruler of the Queen's Navee,
Whose praise Great Britain loudly
chants.

SIN HEBE.

We are his sisters, and his cousins,
and his aunts!

LATIVES.

We are his sisters, and his cousins,
and his aunts!

JOSEPH.

When at anchor here I ride,
My bosom swells with pride,
I snap my fingers at a foeman's
taunts.

SIN HEBE.

We do his sisters, and his cousins,
and his aunts!

We do his sisters, and his cousins,
and his aunts!

JOSEPH.

But when the breezes blow,
I generally go below,
I seek the seclusion that a cabin
grants!

SIN HEBE.

We do his sisters, and his cousins,
and his aunts!

We do his sisters, and his cousins,
and his aunts!

His sisters and his cousins,
Whom he reckons up by dozens,
And his aunts!

SONG. — SIR JOSEPH.

I was a lad I served a term
As a boy to an attorney's firm.
I painted the windows and I swept the
floor,
I polished up the handle of the big
front door.

I polished up that handle so carefuller
than now I am the Ruler of the
Queen's Navee!

CHORUS. — He polished, etc.

As a boy I made such a mark
that they gave me the post of a junior
clerk.

I copied the writs with a smile so bland,
I copied all the letters in a big
round hand —

I copied all the letters in a hand so
free,

that now I am the Ruler of the
Queen's Navee.

CHORUS. — He copied, etc.

In serving writs I made such a name
That an articled clerk I soon became;
I wore clean collars and a brand-new suit
For the pass examination at the In-
stitute.

And that pass examination did so
well for me,

That now I am the Ruler of the
Queen's Navee!

CHORUS. — And that pass examina-
tion, etc.

Of legal knowledge I acquired such a
grip

That they took me into the partnership,
And that junior partnership, I ween,
Was the only ship that I ever had seen.

But that kind of ship so suited me,
That now I am the Ruler of the
Queen's Navee!

CHORUS. — But that kind, etc.

I grew so rich that I was sent
By a pocket borough into Parliament.
I always voted at my party's call,
And I never thought of thinking for
myself at all.

I thought so little, they rewarded me
By making me the Ruler of the
Queen's Navee!

CHORUS. — He thought so little,
etc.

Now, landsmen all, whoever you may be,
If you want to rise to the top of the tree,
If your soul isn't fettered to an office
stool,

Be careful to be guided by this golden
rule —

Stick close to your deck and never
go to sea,

And you all may be Rulers of the
Queen's Navee!

CHORUS. — Stick close, etc.

SIR JOSEPH. You've a remarkably
fine crew, Captain Corcoran.

CAPTAIN. It is a fine crew, Sir
Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH [*examining a very small
midshipman*]. A British sailor is a
splendid fellow, Captain Corcoran.

CAPTAIN. A splendid fellow indeed,
Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. I hope you treat your
crew kindly, Captain Corcoran.

CAPTAIN. Indeed, I hope so, Sir
Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. Never forget that they
are the bulwarks of England's greatness,
Captain Corcoran.

CAPTAIN. So I have always considered them, Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. No bullying, I trust — no strong language of any kind, eh?

CAPTAIN. Oh, never, Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. What, *never*?

CAPTAIN. Hardly ever, Sir Joseph. They are an excellent crew, and do their work thoroughly without it.

SIR JOSEPH [*reprovingly*]. Don't patronize them, sir — pray, don't patronize them.

CAPTAIN. Certainly not, Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. That you are their captain is an accident of birth. I cannot permit these noble fellows to be patronized because an accident of birth has placed you above them and them below you.

CAPTAIN. I am the last person to insult a British sailor, Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. You are the last person who did, Captain Corcoran. Desire that splendid seaman to step forward.

CAPTAIN. Ralph Rackstraw, come here.

SIR JOSEPH [*sternly*]. If what?

CAPTAIN. I beg your pardon —

SIR JOSEPH. If you *please*.

CAPTAIN. Oh yes, of course. If you *please*. [*Ralph steps forward*]

SIR JOSEPH. You're a remarkably fine fellow.

RALPH. Yes, your honour.

SIR JOSEPH. And a first-rate seaman, I'll be bound.

RALPH. There's not a smarter topman in the navy, your honour, though I say it who shouldn't.

SIR JOSEPH. Not at all. Proper self-respect, nothing more. Can you dance a hornpipe?

RALPH. No, your honour.

SIR JOSEPH. That's a pity: all sailors should dance hornpipes. I will teach you one this evening, after dinner. Now, tell me — don't be afraid — how does your captain treat you, eh?

RALPH. A better captain don't walk the deck, your honour.

ALL. Hear!

SIR JOSEPH. Good. I like to hear you speak well of your commanding officer; I dare say he don't deserve it, but still it does you credit. Can you sing?

RALPH. I can hum a little, your honour.

SIR JOSEPH. Then hum this at your leisure. [*Giving him MS. music*] It is a song that I have composed for the use

of the Royal Navy. It is designed to encourage independence of thought and action in the lower branches of the service, and to teach the principle that a British sailor is any man's equal excepting mine. Now, Captain Corcoran, a word with you in your opinion on a tender and sentimental subject.

CAPTAIN. Ay, ay, Sir Joseph. I was swain, in commemoration of this jubilee, to see that extra grog is sent out to the ship's company at one o'clock.

BOATSWAIN. Beg pardon. If you please, your honour?

CAPTAIN. If what? I don't understand you.

BOATSWAIN. If you *please*, your honour.

CAPTAIN. What!

SIR JOSEPH. The gentleman is right. If you *please*.

CAPTAIN [*stamping his foot impatiently*]. If you *please*!

SIR JOSEPH.

For I hold that on the seas

The expression, "If you please," is a particularly gentlemanly tone of speech in all plants.

COUSIN HEBE.

And so do his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts!

ALL.

And so do his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts!

[*Exeunt CAPTAIN and SIR JOSEPH into cabin*]

BOATSWAIN. Ah! Sir Joseph is a true gentleman: courteous and considerate to the very humblest.

RALPH. True, Boatswain: but we are not the very humblest. Sir Joseph has explained our true position to me. As he says, a British seaman is any man's equal excepting his; and Sir Joseph says that, is it not our duty to believe him?

ALL. Well spoke! well spoke!

DICK. You're on a wrong tack, so is he. He means well, but he doesn't know. When people have to obey the people's orders, equality's out of the question.

ALL [*recoiling*]. Horrible! horrible!

BOATSWAIN. Dick Deadeye, if you go for to infuriate this here ship's company too far, I won't answer for the consequences. I'm shoked that's what I am — shoked!

RALPH [*coming forward*]. Messieurs, my mind's made up. I'll speak to the captain's daughter, and tell her, li-

man, of the honest love I have

Hurrah!

PH. Is not my love as good as
r's? Is not my heart as true
ther's? Have I not hands and
ad ears and limbs like another?

Ay, ay.

PH. True, I lack birth —

TSWAIN. You've a berth on
this very ship.

PH. Well said — I had forgotten
Messmates, what do you say?
approve my determination?

We do.

k. I don't.

TSWAIN. What is to be done
his here hopeless chap? Let us
m the song that Sir Joseph has
composed for us. Perhaps it will
his here miserable creature to a
state of mind.

— RALPH, BOATSWAIN, BOAT-
SWAIN'S MATE, AND CHORUS

ash tar is a soaring soul,
ree as a mountain bird!
ergetic fist should be ready to resist
etatorial word.

he should pant and his lip should
curl,
eeks should flame and his brow
should furl,
som should heave and his heart
should glow,
s fist be ever ready for a knock-
down blow.

CHORUS. — His nose should pant,
etc.

es should flash with an inborn fire,
row with scorn be wrung;
ver should bow down to a domi-
neering frown,
he tang of a tyrant tongue.

ot should stamp and his throat
should growl,
ir should twirl and his face should
scowl,

es should flash and his breast
protrude,
his should be his customary
attitude! [Pose]

CHORUS. — His foot should stamp,
etc.

[All strike attitude and then dance
off to hornpipe down hatchway,
excepting RALPH, who remains,
leaning pensively against bul-
wark]

[Enter JOSEPHINE from cabin]

JOSEPHINE. It is useless — Sir
Joseph's attentions nauseate me. I
know that he is a truly great and good
man, but to me he seems tedious,
fretful, and dictatorial. Yet his must
be a mind of no common order, or he
would not dare to teach my dear father
to dance a hornpipe on the cabin table.
[Sees RALPH] Ralph Rackstraw!

[Overcome by emotion]

RALPH. Ay, lady — no other than
poor Ralph Rackstraw!

JOSEPHINE. [Aside] How my head
beats! [Aloud] And why poor, Ralph?

RALPH. I am poor in the essence of
happiness, lady — rich only in never-
ending unrest. In me there meet a
combination of antithetical elements
which are at eternal war with one an-
other. Driven hither by objective
influences — thither by subjective emo-
tions — wafted one moment into blazing
day by mocking hope — plunged the
next into the Cimmerian darkness of
tangible despair, I am but a living
ganglion of irreconcilable antagonisms.
I hope I make myself clear, lady?

JOSEPHINE. Perfectly. [Aside] His
simple eloquence goes to my heart. Oh,
if I dared — but no, the thought is mad-
ness! [Aloud] Dismiss these foolish
fancies, they torture you but needlessly.
Come, make one effort.

RALPH. [Aside] I will — one. [Aloud]
Josephine!

JOSEPHINE [indignantly]. Sir!

RALPH. Ay, even though Jove's
armoury were launched at the head of
the audacious mortal whose lips, un-
hallowed by relationship, dared to
breathe that precious word, yet would
I breathe it once, and then perchance
be silent evermore. Josephine, in one
brief breath I will concentrate the
hopes, the doubts, the anxious fears of
six weary months. Josephine, I am a
British sailor, and I love you!

JOSEPHINE. Sir, this audacity!
[Aside] Oh, my heart, my heart!
[Aloud] This unwarrantable presump-
tion on the part of a common sailor!
[Aside] Common! oh, the irony of the
word! [Aloud] Oh, sir, you forget the
disparity in our ranks.

RALPH. I forget nothing, haughty
lady. I love you desperately, my life
is in thy hand — I lay it at your feet!
Give me hope, and what I lack in educa-
tion and polite accomplishments, that

I will endeavour to acquire. Drive me to despair, and in death alone I shall look for consolation. I am proud, and cannot stoop to implore. I have spoken, and I wait your word!

JOSEPHINE. You shall not wait long. Your proffered love I haughtily reject. Go, sir, and learn to cast your eyes on some village maiden in your own poor rank — they should be lowered before your captain's daughter!

DUET. — JOSEPHINE AND RALPH

JOSEPHINE.

Refrain, audacious tar,
Your suit from pressing,
Remember what you are,
And whom addressing!
Proud lords to seek my hand
In throngs assemble,
The loftiest in the land
Bow down and tremble!
[Aside] I'd laugh my rank to scorn
In union holy,
Were he more highly born
Or I more lowly!

RALPH. Proud lady, have your way,
Unfeeling beauty!
You speak and I obey,
It is my duty!
I am the lowliest tar
That sails the water.
And you, proud maiden, are
My captain's daughter!

[Aside] My heart with anguish torn
Bows down before her,
She laughs my love to scorn,
Yet I adore her.

[Repeat refrain ensemble, then
exit JOSEPHINE into cabin]

RECITATIVE. — RALPH

Can I survive this overbearing
Or live a life of mad despairing,
My proffered love despised, rejected?
No, no, it's not to be expected!

[Calling off] Messmates, ahoy!
Come here! Come here!

[Enter SAILORS, HEBE, and RELATIVES]

ALL. Ay, ay, my boy,
What cheer, what cheer?
Now tell us, pray,
Without delay,
What does she say —
What cheer, what cheer?

RALPH. [To COUSIN HEBE]
The maiden treats my suit with scorn,
Rejects my humble love, my lady;

She says I am ignobly born,
And cuts my hopes adrift, my life!
ALL. Oh, cruel one!

DICK.

She spurns your suit? Oho! Oho!
I told you so, I told you so.

SAILORS and RELATIVES.

Shall { we
they } submit?

Are { we
they } but slaves?

Love comes alike to high and low
Britannia's sailors rule the waves,
And shall they stoop to insult?

DICK.

You must submit, you are but slaves!
A lady she! Oho! Oho!
You lowly toilers of the waves,
She spurns you all — I told you so!
[Go]

RALPH [drawing a pistol].

My friends, my leave of life I'm taking
For oh, for oh, my heart is breaking
When I am gone, oh, prithee tell
The maid that, as I died, I loved
well! [Load]

ALL [turning away, weeping].

Of life, alas! his leave he's taking
For, ah! his faithful heart is breaking
When he is gone we'll surely tell
The maid that, as he died, he loved
well.

[During chorus he has
pistol]

RALPH.

Be warned, my messmates all
Who love in rank above you —
For Josephine I fall!

[Puts pistol to his head. A
SAILORS stop their
voices]

[Enter JOSEPHINE]

JOSEPHINE.

Ah! stay your hand! I love you!
ALL.

Ah! stay your hand — she loves me!
RALPH [incredulously]. Loves me!
JOSEPHINE. Loves you!

ALL.

Yes, yes — ah, yes — she loves me!

ENSEMBLE

SAILORS and RELATIVES, and JOSEPHINE

Oh, joy! oh, rapture unforeseen!
For now the sky is all serene;
The god of day — the orb of love,
Has hung his ensign high above,
The sky is all a-blaze.

wooing words and loving song,
chase the lagging hours along.
f { I find } the maiden coy,
we find }
ll } murmur forth decorous joy
n dreamy roundelays!

CK DEADEYE.

inks he's won his Josephine,
though the sky is now serene,
ning thunderbolt above
end their ill-assorted love
Which now is all a-blaze.
aptain, ere the day is gone,
be extremely down upon
ricked men who art employ
ake his Josephine his coy
n many various ways.

EPHINE. This very night,
BE. With bated breath
LPH. And muffled oar —
EPHINE. Without a light,
BE. As still as death,
LPH. We'll steal ashore.
EPHINE. A clergyman
LPH. Shall make us one
ATSWAIN. At half-past ten,
EPHINE. And then we can
PH. Return, for none
ATSWAIN. Can part us then!
This very night, etc.

[DICK appears at hatchway]

K.
ar, nor carry out the scheme
ou've planned,
a lady — you a foremast hand!
mber, she's your gallant captain's
daughter,
rou the meanest slave that crawls
ne water.
Back, vermin, back,
Nor mock us!
Back, vermin, back,
You shock us!

give three cheers for the sailor's
ride
casts all thought of rank aside —
gives up house and fortune too
ne honest love of a sailor true!
British tar is a soaring soul
free as a mountain bird!
nergetic fist should be ready to
esist
ictatorial word!
oot should stamp and his throat
ould growl,
air should twirl and his face should
cowl,

His eyes should flash and his breast
protrude,
And this should be his customary at-
titude. [Pose]

[General Dance]

ACT II

Same Scene. Night. Moonlight.

[CAPTAIN discovered singing on poop-deck, and accompanying himself on a mandolin. LITTLE BUTTERCUP seated on quarter-deck, near gun, gazing sentimentally at him]

SONG. — CAPTAIN

Fair moon, to thee I sing,
Bright regent of the heavens;
Say, why is everything
Either at sixes or at sevens?
I have lived hitherto
Free from breath of slander,
Beloved by all my crew —
A really popular commander.
But now my kindly crew rebel;
My daughter to a tar is partial;
Sir Joseph storms, and, sad to tell,
He threatens a court martial!
Fair moon, to thee I sing,
Bright regent of the heavens;
Say, why is everything
Either at sixes or at sevens?

BUTTERCUP. How sweetly he carols
forth his melody to the unconscious
moon! Of whom is he thinking? Of
some high-born beauty? It may be!
[Sighing] Who is poor Little Buttercup
that she should expect his glance to fall
on one so lowly! And yet if he knew —
[CAPTAIN has come down from
poop-deck]

CAPTAIN. Ah! Little Buttercup,
still on board? That is not quite right,
little one. It would have been more
respectable to have gone on shore at
dusk.

BUTTERCUP. True, dear Captain —
but the recollection of your sad pale
face seemed to chain me to the ship.
I would fain see you smile before I go.

CAPTAIN. Ah! Little Buttercup, I
fear it will be long before I recover my
accustomed cheerfulness, for misfortunes
crowd upon me, and all my old friends
seem to have turned against me!

BUTTERCUP. Oh no — do not say "all", dear Captain. That were unjust to one, at least.

CAPTAIN. True, for you are staunch to me. [*Aside*] If ever I gave my heart again, methinks it would be to such a one as this! [*Aloud*] I am deeply touched by your innocent regard for me, and were we differently situated, I think I could have returned it. But as it is, I fear I can never be more to you than a friend.

BUTTERCUP [*change of manner*]. I understand! You hold aloof from me because you are rich and lofty — and I, poor and lowly. But take care! The poor bumboat woman has gipsy blood in her veins, and she can read destinies. There is a change in store for you!

CAPTAIN. A change!

BUTTERCUP. Ay — be prepared!

DUET. — LITTLE BUTTERCUP AND CAPTAIN

BUTTERCUP.

Things are seldom what they seem:
Skim milk masquerades as cream;
Highlows pass as patent leathers;
Jackdaws strut in peacocks' feathers.

CAPTAIN [*puzzled*].

Very true.
So they do.

BUTTERCUP.

Black sheep dwell in every fold;
All that glitters is not gold;
Storks turn out to be but logs;
Bulls are but inflated frogs.

CAPTAIN [*puzzled*].

So they be,
Frequentlee.

BUTTERCUP.

Drops the wind and stops the mill;
Turbot is ambitious brill;
Gild the farthing if you will,
But it is a farthing still.

CAPTAIN [*puzzled*].

Yes, I know
That is so.

Though to catch your drift I'm striving,
It is shady — it is shady;
I don't see at what you're driving,
Mystic lady — mystic lady,
[*Aside*]

Stern conviction's o'er me stealing,
That the mystic lady's dealing
In oracular revealing.

BUTTERCUP. [*Aside*]

Stern conviction's o'er him stealing,
That the mystic lady's dealing
In oracular revealing.

BOTH. Yes, I know
That is so!

CAPTAIN.

Though I'm anything but clever,
I could talk like that for ever:
Once a cat was killed by care;
Only brave deserve the fair.

BUTTERCUP. Very true,
So they do.

CAPTAIN.

Wink is often good as nod;
Spoils the child who spares the rod
Thirsty lambs run foxy dangers;
Dogs are found in many mangers.

BUTTERCUP. Frequentlee,
I agree.

CAPTAIN.

Paw of cat the chestnut snatches;
Worn-out garments show new patches;
Only count the chick that hatches;
Men are grown up catchy-catchies.

BUTTERCUP. Yes, I know
That is so.

[*Aside*]

Though to catch my drift he's striving,
I'll dissemble — I'll dissemble;
When he sees at what I'm driving,
Let him tremble — let him tremble!

ENSEMBLE

Though a mystic tone { I } borrows
I shall } learn the truth with sorrow
You will }
Here to-day and gone to-morrow;

Yes, I know
That is so!

[*At the end exit LITTLE BUTTERCUP, melodramatically*]

CAPTAIN. Incomprehensible as utterances are, I nevertheless feel they are dictated by a sincere regard for me. But to what new misery is referring? Time alone can tell!

[*Enter SIR JOSEPH*]

SIR JOSEPH. Captain Corcoran, much disappointed with your daughter. In fact, I don't think she will do.

CAPTAIN. She won't do, Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. I'm afraid not. In fact is, that although I have urged suit with as much eloquence as is consistent with an official utterance, I have done so hitherto without success. How do you account for this?

CAPTAIN. Really, Sir Joseph hardly know. Josephine is, of course, sensible of your condescension.

SIR JOSEPH. She naturally would

TAIN. But perhaps your exalted dazzles her.

JOSEPH. You think it does?

TAIN. I can hardly say; but she oddest girl, and her social position below your own. It may be that she is not worthy of you.

JOSEPH. That is really a very sage suggestion, and displays more sagacity of human nature than I had you credit for.

TAIN. See, she comes. If your lordship would kindly reason with her, I can assure her, officially, that it is a standing rule at the Admiralty that love of all ranks, her respect for an official position might induce her to look upon my offer in its proper light.

JOSEPH. It is not unlikely. I will adopt your suggestion. But soft, she is here. Let us withdraw, and seize our opportunity.

JOSEPHINE from cabin. SIR JOSEPH retires up and watches her]

SCENA. — JOSEPHINE

The hours creep on apace,
My guilty heart is quaking!

Alas! that I might retract

The step that I am taking.

How folly it were easy to be showing,
What I am giving up and whither
I am going.

On one hand, papa's luxurious home,
Fringed with ancestral armour and old
Tapestries,

And oak and tapestry from distant
Lands come,

These "blue and white" Venetian
Chandelier-glasses,

Oriental rugs, luxurious sofa
Cushions,

Everything that isn't old, from
Dad's billow's.

On the other, a dark dingy room
In some back street, with stuffy chil-
dren crying,

The organs yell, and clacking house-
wives fume,

And clothes are hanging out all day
Drying;

A one cracked looking-glass to see
Our face in,

Dinner served up in a pudding
Basin!

A simple sailor, lowly born,

Unlettered and unknown,

Who toils for bread from early morn
Till half the night has flown!

No golden rank can he impart —

No wealth of house or land —

No fortune save his trusty heart

And honest brown right hand!

And yet he is so wondrous fair

That love for one so passing rare,

So peerless in his manly beauty,

Were little else than solemn duty!

Oh, god of love, and god of reason, say,
Which of you twain shall my poor heart
Obey!

SIR JOSEPH [*coming forward*]. Madam, it has been represented to me that you are appalled by my exalted rank; I desire to convey to you, officially, my assurance that if your hesitation is attributable to that circumstance, it is uncalled for.

JOSEPHINE. Oh! then your lordship is of opinion that married happiness is not inconsistent with discrepancy in rank?

SIR JOSEPH. I am officially of that opinion.

JOSEPHINE. That the high and the lowly may be truly happy together, provided that they truly love one another?

SIR JOSEPH. Madam, I desire to convey to you, officially, my opinion that love is a platform upon which all ranks meet.

JOSEPHINE. I thank you, Sir Joseph. I *did* hesitate, but I will hesitate no longer. [*Aside*] He little thinks how eloquently he has pleaded his rival's cause!

[CAPTAIN has entered; during this speech he comes forward]

TRIO. — SIR JOSEPH, CAPTAIN, AND JOSEPHINE

CAPTAIN.

Never mind the why and wherefore,
Love can level ranks, and therefore,
Though his lordship's station's mighty,

Though stupendous be his brain,
Though your tastes are mean and flighty
And your fortune poor and plain —

CAPTAIN and SIR JOSEPH.
Ring the merry bells on board ship,
Send the air with warbling wild,

For the union of { his } lordship
 { my }

With a humble captain's child!

CAPTAIN.

For a humble captain's daughter —

answer to them vainly I am seeking;
 hey, the merry maiden and the
 !
 e merry maiden and the tar!

Captain, your young lady is a-
 hing,
 hey, the simple captain that
 u are!
 ery night with Rackstraw to be
 ing;
 hey, the merry maiden and the
 !
 e merry maiden and the tar!

AIN.
 fellow, you have given timely
 rning,
 hey, the thoughtful sailor that
 u are!
 k to Master Rackstraw in the
 rning;
 hey, the cat-o'-nine-tails and the
 ! [Producing a "cat"]
 e merry cat-o'-nine-tails and the
 tar!
 AIN. Dick Deadeye, I thank
 your warning; I will at once
 eans to arrest their flight. This
 oak will afford me ample dis-
 So!

pes himself in a mysterious cloak,
 holding it before his face]

k. Ha! ha! They are foiled —
 — foiled!

CREW on tiptoe, with RALPH and
 OATSWAIN, meeting JOSEPHINE,
 o enters from cabin on tiptoe, with
 ndle of necessaries, and accom-
 nied by LITTLE BUTTERCUP. The
 PTAIN, shrouded in his boat-cloak,
 tches them unnoticed]

ENSEMBLE

fully on tiptoe stealing,
 reathing gently as we may,
 y step with caution feeling,
 e will softly steal away.

[CAPTAIN stamps — chord]

[much alarmed].

Goodness me!

Why, what was that?

k. Silent be,

It was the cat!

ALL [reassured].

It was — it was the cat!

CAPTAIN [producing cat-o'-nine-tails].

They're right, it was the cat!

Pull ashore, in fashion steady,

Hymen will defray the fare,

For a clergyman is ready

To unite the happy pair!

[Stamp as before, and chord]

ALL. Goodness me!

Why, what was that?

DICK. Silent be,

Again the cat!

ALL. It was again that cat!

CAPTAIN [aside].

They're right, it was the cat!

[Throwing off cloak] Hold! [All start]

Pretty daughter of mine,

I insist upon knowing

Where you may be going

With these sons of the brine;

For my excellent crew,

Though foes they could thump any,

Are scarcely fit company,

My daughter, for you.

CREW.

Now, hark at that, do!

Though foes we could thump any,

We are scarcely fit company

For a lady like you!

RALPH.

Proud officer, that haughty lip uncurl!

Vain man, suppress that supercilious
 sneer,

For I have dared to love your match-
 less girl,

A fact well known to all my mess-
 mates here!

CAPTAIN. Oh, horror!

RALPH and JOSEPHINE.

{ I, } humble, poor, and lowly born,
 { He, }

The meanest in the port division —

The butt of epauletted scorn —

The mark of quarter-deck derision —

Have } dared to raise { my } wormy
 Has } { his }

eyes

Above the dust to which you'd mould

{ me,

{ him,

In manhood's glorious pride to rise.

I am } an Englishman — behold
 He is }

{ me!

{ him!

ALL. He is an Englishman!

BOATSWAIN.

He is an Englishman!

For he himself has said it,
And it's greatly to his credit,
That he is an Englishman!

ALL. That he is an Englishman!

BOATSWAIN.

For he might have been a
Roosian,
A French, or Turk, or Proosian,
Or perhaps Itali-an!

ALL. Or perhaps Itali-an!

BOATSWAIN.

But in spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman!

ALL. Hurrah!

For the true-born Englishman!

CAPTAIN [*trying to repress his anger*].

In uttering a reprobation
To any British tar,
I try to speak with modera-
tion,

But you have gone too far.
I'm very sorry to disparage
A humble foremast lad,
But to seek your captain's child
in marriage,
Why, damme, it's too bad!

[*During this COUSIN HEBE and FEMALE RELATIVES have entered*]

ALL [*shocked*]. Oh!

CAPTAIN. Yes, damme, it's too bad!

CAPTAIN and DICK DEADEYE. Yes,
damme, it's too bad.

[*During this SIR JOSEPH has appeared on poop-deck. He is horrified at the bad language*]

HEBE.

Did you hear him — did you hear him?

Oh, the monster overhearing!

Don't go near him — don't go near
him —

He is swearing — he is swearing.

SIR JOSEPH [*with impressive dignity*].

My pain and my distress

I find it is not easy to express;

My amazement — my surprise —

You may learn from the expression of
my eyes!

CAPTAIN.

My lord, one word — the facts are
known before you;

The word was injudicious, I allow —

But hear my explanation, I implore you,
And you will be indignant, too, I vow!

SIR JOSEPH.

I will hear of no defence,

Attempt none if you're sen-

That word of evil sense

Is wholly indefensible.

Go, ribald, get you hence

To your cabin with celerity

This is the consequence

Of ill-advised asperity!

[*Exit CAPTAIN, disgraced, follow-
JOSEPHINE*]

ALL. Behold the consequence

Of ill-advised asperity!

SIR JOSEPH.

For I'll teach you all, ere long,

To refrain from language stro-

For I haven't any sympathy for i-
taunts!

HEBE.

No more have his sisters, nor his e-
nor his aunts.

ALL.

For he is an Englishman, etc.

SIR JOSEPH. Now, tell me, m-
fellow — for you *are* a fine fellow

RALPH. Yes, your honour.

SIR JOSEPH. How came you
tain so far to forget himself?
quite sure you had given him no
for annoyance.

RALPH. Please your honour,
thus wise. You see, I'm only
man — a mere foremast hand —

SIR JOSEPH. Don't be ashan-
that. Your position as a topma-
very exalted one.

RALPH. Well, your honour,
burns as brightly in the foksle as
on the quarter-deck, and Josep-
the fairest bud that ever blos-
upon the tree of a poor fellow's v-
hopes.

[*Enter JOSEPHINE; she rushes to R-
arms. SIR JOSEPH horrified*]

She's the figurehead of my ship
— the bright beacon that guid-
into my port of happiness — the
the purest gem that ever sparkle-
poor but worthy fellow's trusting

ALL. Very pretty.

SIR JOSEPH. Insolent sailor
shall repent this outrage. Seize

[*Two MARINES seize him
handcuff him*]

JOSEPHINE. Oh, Sir Joseph,
him, for I love him tenderly.

SIR JOSEPH. Away with him.
teach this presumptuous marin-
discipline his affections. Have
such a thing as a dungeon on bo-

We have!
JOSEPH. Then load him with
and take him there at once!

OCTETTE

PH.
farewell, my own!
Light of my life, farewell!
or crime unknown
I go to a dungeon cell.

or crime, etc.
PHINE.
the meantime, farewell!
and all alone
Rejoice in your dungeon cell!

and all, etc.
JOSEPH.
bone, a bone
I'll pick with this sailor fell;
let him be shown
At once to his dungeon cell.

let him, etc.
TSWAIN, DICK, and HEBE.
e'll hear no tone
Of the maiden he loves so well!
o telephone
Communicates with his cell!

o telephone, etc.
BUTTERCUP [*mysteriously*].
ut when is known
The secret I have to tell,
ide will be thrown
The door of his dungeon cell.

ide will be thrown
The door of his dungeon cell!
Repeat respective verses, ensemble.

He and RALPH is led off in custody
JOSEPH. Josephine, I cannot tell
the distress I feel at this most pain-
-relation. I desire to express to
officially, that I am hurt. You,
I honoured by seeking in mar-
-you, the daughter of a captain
Royal Navy!

BUTTERCUP. Hold! I have some-
-to say to that!

JOSEPH. You?

BUTTERCUP. Yes, I!

SONG. — BUTTERCUP

many years ago,
n I was young and charming,
s some of you may know
practised baby-farming.

ALL.

Now this is most alarming!
When she was young and charming,
She practised baby-farming,
A many years ago.

BUTTERCUP.

Two tender babes I nussed:
One was of low condition,
The other, upper crust,
A regular patrician.

ALL [*explaining to each other*].
Now, this is the position:
One was of low condition,
The other a patrician,
A many years ago.

BUTTERCUP.

Oh, bitter is my cup!
However could I do it?
I mixed those children up,
And not a creature knew it!

ALL.

However could you do it?
Some day, no doubt, you'll rue it,
Although no creature knew it,
So many years ago.

BUTTERCUP.

In time each little waif
Forsook his foster-mother.
The well-born babe was Ralph —
Your captain was the other!

ALL.

They left their foster-mother.
The one was Ralph, our brother —
Our captain was the other,
A many years ago.

SIR JOSEPH. Then I am to under-
stand that Captain Corcoran and Ralph
were exchanged in childhood's happy
hour — that Ralph is really the Cap-
tain, and the Captain is Ralph?

BUTTERCUP. That is the idea I in-
tended to convey.

SIR JOSEPH. You have done it very
well. Let them appear before me, at
once!

[RALPH enters as Captain; CAPTAIN as
a common sailor. JOSEPHINE rushes
to his arms]

JOSEPHINE. My father — a common
sailor!

CAPTAIN. It is hard, is it not, my
dear?

SIR JOSEPH. This is a very singular
occurrence; I congratulate you both.
[To RALPH] Desire that remarkably
fine seaman to step forward.

RALPH. Corcoran, come here.

CAPTAIN. If what? If you please.

SIR JOSEPH. Perfectly right. If you please.

RALPH. Oh. If you please.

[CAPTAIN steps forward]

SIR JOSEPH. [To CAPTAIN] You are an extremely fine fellow.

CAPTAIN. Yes, your honour.

SIR JOSEPH. So it seems that you were Ralph, and Ralph was you.

CAPTAIN. So it seems, your honour.

SIR JOSEPH. Well, I need not tell you that after this change in your condition, a marriage with your daughter will be out of the question.

CAPTAIN. Don't say that, your honour — love levels all ranks.

SIR JOSEPH. It does to a considerable extent, but it does not level them as much as that. [Handing JOSEPHINE to RALPH] Here — take her, sir, and mind you treat her kindly.

RALPH and JOSEPHINE.
Oh, bliss! oh, rapture!

SIR JOSEPH.

Sad my lot, and sorry,
What shall I do? I cannot live alone!

ALL.

What will he do? he cannot live alone!

HEBE.

Fear nothing — while I live I'll not desert you.

I'll soothe and comfort your declining days.

SIR JOSEPH.

No, don't do that.

HEBE. Yes, but indeed I'd rather.

SIR JOSEPH [resigned].

To-morrow morn our vows shall all be plighted,

Three loving pairs on the same day united!

DUET. — RALPH AND JOSEPHINE

Oh! joy! oh, rapture unforeseen!
The clouded sky is now serene;
The god of day — the orb of love,
Has hung his ensign high above,
The sky is all ablaze.

With wooing words and loving song,
We'll chase the lagging hours along;

And if { he finds } the maiden coy,
 { I find }

We'll murmur forth decorous joy,
In dreamy roundelays.

CAPTAIN.

For he is the Captain of the
fore.

ALL.

And a right good captain too!

CAPTAIN.

And though before my fall

I was Captain of you all,

I'm a member of the crew.

ALL.

Although before his fall, etc.

CAPTAIN.

I shall marry with a wife

In my own rank of life!

[Turning to BUTTERCUP]

And you, my love, are she.

I must wander to and fro,

But wherever I may go,

I shall never be untrue to thee!

ALL. What, never?

CAPTAIN. No, never!

ALL. What, never?

CAPTAIN. Hardly ever!

ALL.

Hardly ever be untrue to thee.

Then give three cheers, and one
more,

For the faithful seamen of the
fore.

BUTTERCUP.

For he loves Little Buttercup,

Little Buttercup,

I'm sure I shall never know why;

But still he loves Buttercup, poor

Buttercup,

Sweet Little Buttercup, ay!

ALL. For he loves, etc.

SIR JOSEPH.

I'm the monarch of the sea,

And when I've married thee

[To HEBE]

I'll be true to the devotion that
love implants.

HEBE.

Then good-bye to his sisters, and

cousins, and his aunts,

Especially his cousins,

Whom he reckons up by dozer

His sisters, and his cousins, and
aunts!

ALL.

For he is an Englishman,

And he himself hath said it,

And it's greatly to his credit

That he is an Englishman!

BECKET

(1893)

[Printed, 1879]

BY ALFRED TENNYSON

ALFRED TENNYSON

(1809-1892)

TENNYSON was sixty-six years old when he began writing plays. He had his reputation as the leading lyric poet of his time. And he had put a stamp on his writings, not only distinctively English, but as reflecting the spirit of his age. Tennyson is more specifically dated than Browning. He is more reflective of the general trend of the Victorian era, and he is as foreign to the renaissance which was in England during the late "eighties" as though he were of a period far removed. His religious questionings were thoroughly in accord with the state of opinion created by the widespread discussion of the theory of evolution, and he was content and faithfully dealing with the problems open-mindedly. The early reactions of the conservative are expressed in Tennyson's poems: the attitude toward the Irish question, in "The Princess"; the moral preachments, throughout "In Memoriam" and "Maud"; and the scientific interest represented, not only in his poems, but in such a small piece as "Flower in the Crannied Wall."

Tennyson's interest in the theatre was not due to any impelling love of the dramatic. His work, heretofore, had been of a narrative, epic, idyllic character. It had been tested lyrically and technically, and had come forth wonderfully purified in form and expression. "The Idylls of the King" represent a narrative as simple and decorative as the pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti or of Aubrey Beardsley. Though filled with chivalry, they have about them none of the original, rugged quality of Sir Thomas Mallory. They are polished to suit the Tennyson technique.

He had, in "Maud", attempted a certain form of play-writing — a form which he called *monodrame*, — but this was not, in any sense, *of* the theatre or *for* the theatre. He was not essentially dramatic in his depiction of character, nor were his monologues, when he wrote them, fraught with any of the deep, vivid humanity of Browning.

We might, therefore, say that Tennyson, in comparison with Browning, was the less prepared of the two to meet the requirements of the stage. And we doubt whether he would have attempted a task for which he was not equipped had it not been that he was encouraged to do so through the cordial interest of Henry Irving. Both Macready and Irving not only stood sponsors for the dramas of Tennyson and Browning, but it is because of them that the two poets became dramatic experimenters.

Tennyson's interest in Elizabethan drama prompted him, not only in his form, but likewise, in his subject-matter. We are told that he selected his topics with the purpose of explaining certain national ideals or ideas left untouched by Shakespeare.

The order of the Tennyson dramas is as follows: "Queen Mary" (1875); "The Falcon" (1876); "The Cup" (1881); "The Promise of the Land" (1882); "Becket" (1884); "The Foresters" (1892). These are based on

very definite sources, showing that Tennyson was a student of his particular period and was moved not so much by inspiration as by historical accuracy. When he wrote "Queen Mary," he studied Froude. There is no indication that he read Hugo's "Mary Tudor", or that he was indebted to the plays on "Queen Mary" by Decker and Webster, or Thomas Heywood. When he wrote "Harold", he studied carefully Freeman's "History of the Norman Conquest", and he analyzed the situations in Bulwer's novel, "Harold."

His preparations for "Becket" were equally as careful. The poet himself said:

Admirers of "Becket" will find that Becket's letters, and the writings of Herbert of Bosham, Fitzstephen, and John of Salisbury throw great light on those days. Bishop Lightfoot found out about *Rosamund* for me.

Even in his lighter pieces Tennyson turned to others for his plots. "The Falcon" was taken from Plutarch's "De Mulierum Virtutibus", and "The Foresters" from incidents in Boccaccio's "Decameron." He was self-conscious in his national ambitions: in "Queen Mary" there is a distinct desire to paint the individual claiming religious liberty; in "Becket" there is a formal struggle between Crown and the Church; in "Harold" we get racial conflict; and in "The Foresters", as Arthur C. Benson says, there is a reflection of the state of the people during the Magna Charta, when the struggle of political liberty over absolutism began.

Tennyson was not taken over-seriously in the dramatic world of his day. In fact, it was Irving alone who brought the poet to success. The public did not have respect for the official character of the Poet Laureate. It is curious, like to note two other qualities in Tennyson which challenged the manner of the poet and the limitations of royalty. "The Promise of May" was a terrible failure, partly because of the free discussion invited by the moral problem involved. It is interesting to note the contemporaneous debates created by Tennyson's reactions on moral, spiritual, and scientific matters. In addition to which, the Victorian stage was handicapped by the ignorance and limitations of Queen Victoria, whose reputation was largely dependent on the intellectual forcefulness and diplomatic cleverness of her Prime Ministers — Lord Beaconsfield, W. E. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury. It is said that when a command performance of "Becket" was ordered, it did not quite satisfy the old-fashioned tastes of the Queen, who, in probability, would much rather have been regaled with stage pieces like "Sweethearts" or "Sweet Lavender."

The history of the Tennyson plays involves a record of Henry Irving and Terry. The actor produced "Queen Mary" at the London Lyceum, April 18, 1881, with Miss Bateman in the title rôle and himself as *Philip of Spain*. He also gave "The Cup" and "Becket." "The Falcon" was produced at the St. James Theatre, under the management of John Hare and the Kendals, in December, 1881. "The Cup" was produced by Irving and Terry on January 3, 1881; "The Promise of May" at the Globe Theatre, on November 11, 1882; "Becket" at the Lyceum on February 6, 1893; and finally "The Foresters" was given an American production by Augustin Daly, on March 17, 1892.

It was in 1878 that Tennyson was reported as having had in preparation since 1876 a drama on "Becket." Theatrical papers announced, in October of the same year, that it was understood Irving was considering the manuscript. The actor had been a friend of the poet since 1876, but his friendship was not of that order which

upset the wisdom of the manager. "Becket" was held for many years, until, as Irving thought, were ready for it. According to the fashion of the poet, were proofs of the play in 1879, and its publication was deferred until December 1884. According to the poet's son, Tennyson visited Canterbury in August, and in this way obtained local color.

was Irving's firm impression that "Becket" was a finer play than Shakespeare's "King John." But, however that may have been, he was convinced, in that public taste was not ready for it. There must have been some doubt part of Tennyson as to how far his readers would take the Catholicism of the play, for he asked W. T. Ward to come and hear him read it, and to talk over the historical points with him. Tennyson was attacked on all sides for his lack of handling of *Becket's* character; especially was he scored for suggesting any religious element in *Becket's* association with the fair *Rosamund*. From the Catholic point of view, no better article may be found than Maurice T. Egan's " 'St. Thomas of Canterbury' and 'Becket' ", in which he contrasts Tennyson's drama with Aubrey de Vere's dramatic poem dealing with the same figure. The whole article attacks Tennyson's ignorance of Catholicism and his wilful distortion of the truth. "The intolerance and impatience of his *Becket* is only equalled by the self-conceit of his *St. Swithun*," so this critic asserts.

It has not been the judgment of the times, since "Becket" was written, that it is a great play, nor that it reflects perfectly the spirit of the twelfth century or the character of *Henry*, claimed for it by the historian, John Richard Greene. One might, however, why it appealed to Irving. Its dominant recommendations are its power in one character, and its pictorial pageantry, both of which offered ample scope for colour and display. Readers have an opportunity of studying how far Irving struggled with the original version of the play; for the stage version, wherein transpositions of scenes and cuts are indicated, was issued at the time of the production at the Lyceum.

The preparations for the Irving performance took place during the very last years of Tennyson's life; some of the final poetic lines written by him were penned at the request of Irving, to go at the end of the Northampton scene, — what Hallam Tennyson calls the "anthem speech."

Irving writes:

On the appearance of "Becket", I pointed out to Tennyson that the poem seemed to me to have great possibilities if I could only get it into stage shape. I asked him if he would allow it to be produced in an altered form, and he replied that I might do anything I pleased. Accordingly, I made such changes as I thought necessary, and sent it to him cut for the stage, and suggesting that he should make the changes, and this he did, adding a speech at the end of the act.

During Tennyson's final illness, he was very much concerned about rehearsing Irving again writes:

One of the most touching incidents which I remember occurred while he was on his deathbed. He turned to the physician, Dr. Dabbs, who told me of the incident, and said: "I suppose I shall never see 'Becket.'" "I fear not," said the doctor. "They did not do me justice with 'The Promise of May' ", said the dying poet, "but Irving will do me justice in 'Becket.' "

The play¹ was produced at a cost of £4,723 11s. 2d. And because of the splendour of the pageantry and the very powerful acting of Irving, it was one of the successes of the season, running one hundred and twelve times.

There are some splendid purple patches of poetry in this play, but there are likewise many scenes that are episodic and throw small light on the transposition of *Becket's* character from the courtier-priest to the domineering prelate. Irving, having appeared as *Richelieu* and *Cardinal Wolsey*, the mitre of *Becket* in consequence sat easily upon his head. The interest in the acted play, apart from its colour and proportion, was due to the interest awakened by what Irving put into it of fine characterization and technical art. A contemporary criticism, written for the "Theatrical World" of 1894, by Archer, is quoted herewith:

"Becket" [July 9-20, 1894], revived last week at the Lyceum, is a mild and dignified rebuke to apriorist criticism, with its rules and formulas. There is no rule that it does not break, no formula that it fails to set at naught. It is rambling, disjointed, structureless; its psychological processes take place between the acts; it overrides history for the sake of an infantile love-interest; its blank verse is "undramatic", and its humour is — well, unsophisticated. In short, it is nothing that it ought to be, and everything that it oughtn't. Literally everything: for it is what most of all it oughtn't to be — a success. It delighted the audience on the evening when I saw it — the third of the revival. There was a genuine warmth in their applause which did my heart good, for it entirely expressed my own sentiments. All Miss Terry's charm cannot make the *Rosamund* scenes very interesting to me; but the nobility and pathos of Mr. Irving's *Becket* are as irresistible as ever. This is undoubtedly one of his great achievements; an entirely beautiful and memorable creation. The verse may be as "undramatic" as you please, but it is a delight to hear Mr. Irving speak it; and, for my part, I much prefer Mr. Tennyson's "undramatic" verse to the self-consciously and spasmodically dramatic iambs of some other poet. "Becket", in sum, is not a coherent, organic drama, but a series of animated historic scenes, beautifully written, staged, spoken and acted.

As a matter of historical record, let it be said that Irving was playing *Becket* on the evening (October 13, 1905) when he was stricken, and probably the words that came from the actor's mouth were those significant lines spoken by *Becket* at the close of the play:

"Into Thy hands, O Lord — into Thy hands! —"

¹ Adams, in his "Dictionary of the Drama", mentions the following dramas dealing with *Becket*: Bishop of Bale's "Of the Impostures of Thomas Becket"; W. H. Ireland's "Henry II" (1799); Douglas Jerrold's "Thomas à Beckett" (1829); R. Cattermole's "Becket: A Historical Tragedy" (1832); George Darley's "Thomas à Becket" (1840); Arthur Helps' "King Henry the Second" (1843); George Wightwick's "Henry II" (1848); Dr. Charles Grindrod's "King Henry II" (1883); Aubrey De Vere's "St. Thomas of Canterbury" (1876).

Adams adds: An adaptation of Tennyson's drama, consisting mostly of the scenes relating to *Rosamund*, adapted by E. W. Godwin, performed as "Fair Rosamund", in Cannock Wood, Wimbleton, summer of 1886, with Lady Archibald Campbell as *Rosamund*, Basil Roe as *Henry II*, F. H. Macklin as *Becket*, Miss Maud Millett as *Margery*, Miss Genevieve Ward as *Queen Eleanor*. Irving's arrangement was given, London Lyceum, February 1893; English provinces in 1904, when Mabel Hackney was *Rosamund*, Mrs. Cecil Rathbone as *Eleanor*. First in America, September, 1893, San Francisco.

BECKET
BY ALFRED TENNYSON

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL OF SELBORNE

MY DEAR SELBORNE — To you, the honoured Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor ; — which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless — for so you have assured me — won your approbation. — Ever yours

TENNYSON.

CAST OF INITIAL PERFORMANCE OF BECKET

London Lyceum Theatre

February 6, 1893

HENRY II	<i>son of the Earl of Anjou</i>	Mr. William Terriss
THOMAS BECKET	<i>Chancellor of England,</i> <i>afterwards Archbishop</i> <i>of Canterbury</i>	Mr. Irving
GILBERT FOLIOT	<i>Bishop of London</i>	Mr. Lacy
ROGER	<i>Archbishop of York</i> <i>Bishop of Hereford</i>	Mr. Beaumont Mr. Cushing
HILARY	<i>Bishop of Chichester</i>	Mr. Archer
JOCELYN	<i>Bishop of Salisbury</i>	—
JOHN OF SALISBURY	<i>} friends of Becket</i>	{ Mr. Bishop Mr. Haviland
HERBERT OF BOSHAM		
WALTER MAP	<i>reputed author of "Golias,"</i> <i>Latin poems against the</i> <i>priesthood</i>	—
KING LOUIS OF FRANCE		Mr. Bond
GEOFFREY	<i>son of Rosamund and</i> <i>Henry</i>	—
GRIM	<i>a monk of Cambridge</i>	Mr. W. H. Holloway
SIR REGINALD FITZURSE	<i>} the four knights of the</i> <i>King's household, ene-</i> <i>mies of Becket</i>	{ Mr. Frank Cooper Mr. Tyars Mr. Hague Mr. Percival
SIR RICHARD DE BRITO		
SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY		
SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE		
DE BROC OF SALTWOOD CASTLE		Mr. Tabb
LORD LEICESTER		Mr. Harvey
PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA		Mr. Howe
TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS		{ Mr. Gordon Craig —
JOHN OF OXFORD	<i>called the Swearer</i>	Mr. Ian Robertson
ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE	<i>Queen of England (divorced</i> <i>from Louis of France)</i>	Miss Geneviève Ward
ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD		Miss Ellen Terry
MARGERY		Miss Kate Phillips

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

BECKET

PROLOGUE

*Scene in Normandy. Interior of the
Hall. Roofs of a City seen thro'
the windows.*

HENRY and BECKET at chess]

BECKET. So then our good Arch-
bishop Theobald

is bring- I am grieved to know as
much.

HENRY. But we must have a
fightier man than he
for successor.

BECKET. Have you thought of one?

HENRY. A cleric lately poison'd his
own mother,
and is brought before the courts of
the Church,
but degraded him. I hope they
will strip him.

and have hang'd him.

BECKET. It is your move.

HENRY. Well — there. *[Moves]*

Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's
he
climb'd the throne and almost
snatch'd the crown;

the royal customs of our realm
Church should hold her baronies of

her lords amenable to law.

are them written down and made
the law.

BECKET. My liege, I move my
shop.

HENRY. And if I live,
without my leave shall excom-
municate

ants or my household.

BECKET. Look to your king.

HENRY. No man without my leave
shall cross the seas

the Pope against me — I pray
your pardon.

BECKET. Well — will you move?

HENRY. There. *[Moves]*

BECKET. Check — you move so
wildly.

HENRY. There then! *[Moves]*

BECKET. Why — there then, for you
see my bishop

Hath brought your king to a standstill.
You are beaten.

HENRY *[kicks over the board]*. Why,
there then — down go bishop and
king together.

I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my
fancy

Upon the game I should have beaten
thee,

But that was vagabond.

BECKET. Where, my liege? With
Phryne,

Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?

HENRY. My Rosamund is no Lais,
Thomas Becket;

And yet she plagues me too — no fault
in her —

But that I fear the Queen would have
her life.

BECKET. Put her away, put her
away, my liege!

Put her away into a nunnery!

Safe enough there from her to whom
thou art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore should
she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford more
Than that of other paramours of thine?

HENRY. How dost thou know I am
not wedded to her?

BECKET. How should I know?

HENRY. That is my secret, Thomas.

BECKET. State secrets should be
patent to the statesman

Who serves and loves his king, and
whom the king

Loves not as statesman, but true lover
and friend.

HENRY. Come, come, thou art but
deacon, not yet bishop,

No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor
yet.

I would to God thou wert, for I should find

An easy father confessor in thee.

BECKET. St. Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.

HENRY. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!

Come, come, I love thee and I know thee, I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,

A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish, A dish-designer, and most amorous Of good old red sound liberal Gascon wine:

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it?

BECKET. That palate is insane which cannot tell

A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.

HENRY. Well, who loves wine loves woman.

BECKET. So I do.

Men are God's trees, and women are God's flowers;

And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the flowers

Are all the fairer.

HENRY. And thy thoughts, thy fancies?

BECKET. Good dogs, my liege, well train'd, and easily call'd Off from the game.

HENRY. Save for some once or twice,

When they turn down the game and worried it.

BECKET. No, my liege, no! — not once — in God's name, no!

HENRY. Nay, then, I take thee at thy word — believe thee

The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.

And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,

Not Eleanor — she whom I love indeed

As a woman should be loved — Why dost thou smile

So dolorously?

BECKET. My good liege, if a man Wastes himself among women, how should he love

A woman, as a woman should be loved?

HENRY. How shouldst thou know that never hast loved one?

Come, I would give her to thy care England

When I am out in Normandy Anjou.

BECKET. My lord, I am your subject, not your —

HENRY. Pander. God's eyes! I know all that — not purveyor

Of pleasures, but to save a life — life;

Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from fire.

I have built a secret bower in England Thomas,

A nest in a bush.

BECKET. And where, my liege? HENRY [*whispers*]. Thine

BECKET. That's lone enough.

HENRY [*laying paper on table*]. The chart here marked 'Her Bower'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a clinging wood,

A hundred pathways running every way,

And then a brook, a bridge; and at that

This labyrinthine brickwork maze, maze,

And then another wood, and in the midst

A garden and my Rosamund. Look at this line —

The rest you see is colour'd green but this

Draws thro' the chart to her.

BECKET. This blood-red line HENRY. Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

BECKET. And where is she? T HENRY. In her English nest?

HENRY. Would God she were — here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower Anjou

And pass her to her secret bower England.

She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

BECKET. My liege, I pray thee spare me hence: a widow

And orphan child, whom one of the wild barons —

HENRY. Ay, ay, but swear to spare her in England.

BECKET. Well, well, I swear, but to please myself.

HENRY. Whatever come between us?

BECKET. What should come Between us, Henry?

RY. Nay — I know not, Thomas.
 BET. What need then? Well —
 whatever come between us.

[*Going*]

RY. A moment! thou didst help
 me to my throne
 Leobald's time, and after by thy
 wisdom
 kept it firm from shaking; but
 now I,
 for my realm's sake, myself must be
 the wizard
 to use that tempest which will set it
 trembling
 to base it deeper. I, true son
 of the Holy Church — no croucher to the
 categories
 tread the kings their children
 underheel —
 scourge her; and the Holy Father,
 while
 Barbarossa butts him from his
 chair,
 need my help — be facile to my
 hands.

is my time. Yet — lest there
 could be flashes
 fulminations from the side of
 Rome,
 verdict on England — I will have
 my son Henry crown'd the King
 of England,
 so the Papal bolt may pass by
 England,
 seeming his, not mine, and fall
 broad.

ve it done — and now.

BET. Surely too young
 for this shadow of a crown; and
 no'

him heartily, I can spy already
 in of hard and headstrong in him.

ay,
 Queen should play his kingship
 against thine!

RY. I will not think so, Thomas.
 Who shall crown him?

rbury is dying.

BET. The next Canterbury.
 RY. And who shall he be, my
 friend Thomas? Who?

BET. Name him; the Holy
 Father will confirm him.

RY [*lays his hand on BECKET'S*
shoulder]. Here!

BET. Mock me not. I am not
 even a monk.

jest — no more. Why — look —
 this a sleeve

a archbishop?

RY. But the arm within

Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my
 foes.

BET. A soldier's, not a spiritual
 arm.

HENRY. I lack a spiritual soldier,
 Thomas —

A man of this world and the next to
 boot.

BET. There's Gilbert Foliot.

HENRY. He! too thin, too thin.
 Thou art the man to fill out the Church
 robe;

Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much
 for me.

BET. Roger of York.

HENRY. Roger is Roger of York.
 King, Church, and State to him but
 foils wherein

To set that precious jewel, Roger of
 York.

No.

BET. Henry of Winchester?

HENRY. Him who crown'd Stephen —
 King Stephen's brother! No; too royal
 for me.

And I'll have no more Anselms.

BET. Sire, the business
 Of thy whole kingdom waits me: let
 me go.

HENRY. Answer me first.

BET. Then for thy barren jest
 Take thou mine answer in bare common-
 place —

Nolo episcopari.

HENRY. Ay, but *Nolo*
Archiepiscopari, my good friend,
 Is quite another matter.

BET. A more awful one.
 Make *me* archbishop! Why, my liege,
 I know

Some three or four poor priests a thou-
 sand times

Fitter for this grand function. *Me* arch-
 bishop!

God's favour and king's favour might so
 clash

That thou and I — That were a jest
 indeed!

HENRY. Thou angerest me, man: I
 do not jest.

[*Enter ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD*
FITZURSE]

ELEANOR [*singing*].

Over! the sweet summer closes,
 The reign of the roses is done —

HENRY. [*To BECKET, who is going*]
 Thou shalt not go. I have not
 ended with thee.

ELEANOR [*seeing chart on table*]. This chart with the red line! her bower! whose bower?

HENRY. The chart is not mine, but Becket's: take it, Thomas.

ELEANOR. Becket! O — ay — and these chossmen on the floor — the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again — and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old.

HENRY. True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

ELEANOR. What matters? State matters? love matters?

HENRY. My love for thee, and thine for me.

ELEANOR.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done;
Over and gone with the roses,
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again — your north chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first — but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art — like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close,
Over and gone with the roses,
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know, and won the violet at Toulouse; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out of season; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violet.

BECKET. Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love.

ELEANOR. So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France: and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of

the harvest, and the honeymoon is gall of love; he dies of his honeymoon! I could pity this poor world myself, it is no better ordered.

HENRY. Dead is he, my Queen. What, altogether? Let me swear naught that by this cross on thy neck. Good eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

ELEANOR. Doth it please you? it and wear it on that hard heart of yours — there. [*Gives it to him*]

HENRY [*puts it on*]. On this breast before so hard a heart, To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

ELEANOR. Has my simple song you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provencal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme —

HENRY. That the heart were lost in the rhyme and the matter in the matter. May we not pray you, Madam, to show us the hardness of your facility?

ELEANOR. The wells of Castaly not wasted upon the desert. We but jest.

HENRY. There's no jest on the breast of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

[*Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM*]

HERBERT. My liege, the good Archbishop is no more.

HENRY. Peace to his soul!

HERBERT. I left him with peace on his face — that sweet other-world smile which will be reflected in the spirit-body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishoprick.

HENRY. Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk!

BECKET. My heart is full of tears. I have no answer.

HENRY. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy; would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but hold out thy hand. Meanwhile revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

[*Leaps over the table, and exits*]

BECKET. He did prefer me to the chancellorship, Believing I should ever aid the Church. But have I done it? He commends now

ut his grave to this archbishop-
k.

ERT. A dead man's dying wish
uld be of weight.

ET. *His* should. Come with
Let me learn at full
anner of his death, and all he
l.

[*Exeunt HERBERT and BECKET*]
NOR. Fitzurse, that chart with
line — thou sawest it — her

URSE. Rosamund's?

NOR. Ay — there lies the secret
whereabouts, and the King gave
Chancellor.

URSE. To this son of a London
nt — how your Grace must hate

NOR. Hate him? as brave a
as Henry and a goodlier man:
u — dost thou love this Chan-
hat thou hast sworn a voluntary
ce to him?

URSE. Not for my love toward
t because he had the love of the
How should a baron love a
on horseback, with the retinue of
ings behind him, outroyalling
? Besides, he help the King to
wn our castles, for the which I
n.

NOR. For the which I honour
statesman not Churchman he.
and sound policy that: I could
e him for it: you could not see
g for the kinglings.

URSE. Ay, but he speaks to a
s tho' he were a churl, and to a
s if he were a noble.

NOR. Pride of the plebeian!

URSE. And this plebeian like to
Archbishop!

NOR. True, and I have an in-
loathing of these black sheep of
pacy. Archbishop? I can see
into a man than our hot-headed
and if there ever come feud
a Church and Crown, and I do
n charm this secret out of our
thomas, I am not Eleanor.

URSE. Last night I followed a
in the city here. Her face was
but the back methought was
nd — his paramour, thy rival.
el for thee.

NOR. Thou feel for me! — para-
-rival! King Louis had no para-
and I loved him none the more.
had many, and I loved him none
— now neither more nor less —

not at all; the cup's empty. I would
she were but his paramour, for men tire
of their fancies; but I fear this one
fancy hath taken root, and borne blos-
som too, and she, whom the King loves
indeed, is a power in the State. Rival!
— ay, and when the King passes, there
may come a crash and embroilment as
in Stephen's time; and her children —
canst thou not — that secret matter
which would heat the King against
thee. [*Whispers him and he starts*] Nay,
that is safe with me as with thyself:
but canst thou not — thou art drowned
in debt — thou shalt have our love, our
silence, and our gold — canst thou not
— if thou light upon her — free me
from her?

FITZURSE. Well, Madam, I have
loved her in my time.

ELEANOR. No, my bear, thou hast
not. My Courts of Love would have
held thee guiltless of love — the fine at-
tractions and repulses, the delicacies,
the subtleties.

FITZURSE. Madam, I loved accord-
ing to the main purpose and intent of
nature.

ELEANOR. I warrant thee! thou
wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs
cracked — enough of this. Follow me
this Rosamund day and night, whither-
soever she goes; track her, if thou canst,
even into the King's lodging, that I may
[*clenches her fist*] — may at least have
my cry against him and her, — and
thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of
the King, for thou in thy way didst
once, what shall I call it, affect her
thine own self.

FITZURSE. Ay, but the young colt
wined and whinnied and flung up her
heels; and then the King came honey-
ing about her, and this Becket, her
father's friend, like enough staved us
from her.

ELEANOR. Us!

FITZURSE. Yea, by the Blessed Vir-
gin! There were more than I buzzing
round the blossom — De Tracy — even
that flint De Brito.

ELEANOR. Carry her off among you;
run in upon her and devour her, one and
all of you; make her as hateful to her-
self and to the King, as she is to me.

FITZURSE. I and all would be glad to
wreak our spite on the rosefaced minion
of the King, and bring her to the level
of the dust, so that the King —

ELEANOR. Let her eat it like the ser-
pent, and be driven out of her paradise.

ACT I

SCENE FIRST. — BECKET'S *House in London. Chamber barely furnished.*
[BECKET *unrobing.* HERBERT OF BOSHAM and SERVANT]

SERVANT. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

BECKET. Friend, am I so much better than thyself
That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out
With this day's work, get thee to thine own bed.
Leave me with Herbert, friend.

[*Exit SERVANT*]
Help me off, Herbert, with this — and this.

HERBERT. Was not the people's blessing as we past
Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

BECKET. The people know their Church a tower of strength,
A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.

Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

HERBERT. Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?

BECKET. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's
Together more than mortal man can bear.

HERBERT. Not heavier than thine armour at Thoulouse?

BECKET. O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship
I more than once have gone against the Church.

HERBERT. To please the King?

BECKET. Ay, and the King of kings, Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just
The Church should pay her scutage like the lords.

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot

That I am not the man to be your Primate,

For Henry could not work a miracle —
Make an Archbishop of a soldier?

HERBERT. Ay,
For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

BECKET. Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me,
Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering out of heaven
Into her bosom.

HERBERT. Ay, the fire, the light,

The spirit of the twelve Apostles en-
Into thy making.

BECKET. And when I was a child
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise
Dream,

Or prophecy, that?

HERBERT. Well, dream and prophecy
both.

BECKET. And when I was of Thomas
bald's household, once —
The good old man would sometimes
have his jest —

He took his mitre off, and set it on
And said, 'My young Archbishop
thou wouldst make

A stately Archbishop!' Jest or prophecy
there?

HERBERT. Both, Thomas, both.

BECKET. Am I the man? I
rang

Within my head last night, and when I
slept

Methought I stood in Canterbury
ster,

And spake to the Lord God, and
'O Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and
cate meats,

And secular splendours, and a favourite
Of players, and a courtier, and a favourite
Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions
and lynxes.

Am I the man?' And the Lord
swear'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more
man.'

And then I ask'd again, 'O Lord
God,

Henry the King hath been my friend
my brother,

And mine uplifter in this world
chosen me

For this thy great archbishoprick,
believing

That I should go against the Church
with him,

And I shall go against him with
Church,

And I have said no word of this to
Am I the man?' And the Lord
swear'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more
man.'

And thereupon, methought, He came
toward me,

And smote me down upon the Minster
floor.

I fell.

HERBERT. God make not thee,
thy foes, fall.

BECKET. I fell. Why fall? Why
 He smite me? What?
 fall off — to please the King
 ce more?
 ht — tho' somehow traitor to the
 ng —
 quest and mine utmost for the
 urch?
 BECKET. Thou canst not fall that
 y. Let traitor be;
 w have fought thine utmost for
 e Church,
 rom the throne of thine arch-
 hoprick?
 w been made Archbishop hadst
 ou told him,
 n to fight mine utmost for the
 urch,
 t the King'?

BECKET. But dost thou think the
 ng
 mine election?
 BECKET. I do think the King
 potent in the election, and why
 t?
 should not Heaven have so in-
 red the King?
 nforted. Thou art the man —
 thou
 tier Anselm.

BECKET. I do believe thee, then. I
 t the man.
 t I seem appall'd — on such a
 dden
 h an eagle-height I stand and
 e
 t that runs between me and the
 ng.
 d our Theobald well when I was
 h him;
 d King Henry well as Chancellor;
 is no more, and I must serve the
 urch.

Canterbury is only less than Rome,
 d my doubts I fling from me like
 st,
 w and scatter all scruples to the
 nd,
 the puissance of the warrior,
 the wisdom of the Chancellor,
 the heap'd experiences of life,
 upon the side of Canterbury —
 ly mother Canterbury, who sits
 atter'd robes. Laics and barons
 ro'
 ndom gifts of careless kings, have
 aspt
 wings, her advowsons, granges,
 rms,
 oodly acres — we will make her
 hole;

Not one rood lost. And for these Royal
 customs,
 These ancient Royal customs — they
 are Royal,
 Not of the Church — and let them be
 anathema,
 And all that speak for them anathema.

HERBERT. Thomas, thou art moved
 too much.

BECKET. O Herbert, here
 I gash myself asunder from the King,
 Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own,
 a grief

To show the scar for ever — his, a hate
 Not ever to be heal'd.

[Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying
 from SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.
 Drops her veil]

BECKET. Rosamund de Clifford!

ROSAMUND. Save me, father, hide
 me — they follow me — and I must not
 be known.

BECKET. Pass in with Herbert there.

[Exeunt ROSAMUND and HER-
 BERT by side door]

[Enter FITZURSE]

FITZURSE. The Archbishop!

BECKET. Ay! what wouldst thou,
 Reginald?

FITZURSE. Why — why, my lord, I
 follow'd — follow'd one —

BECKET. And then what follows?
 Let me follow thee.

FITZURSE. It much imports me I
 should know her name.

BECKET. What her?

FITZURSE. The woman that I fol-
 low'd hither.

BECKET. Perhaps it may import her
 all as much

Not to be known.

FITZURSE. And what care I for
 that?

Come, come, my lord Archbishop; I
 saw that door

Close even now upon the woman.

BECKET. Well?

FITZURSE [making for the door]. Nay,
 let me pass, my lord, for I must
 know.

BECKET. Back, man!

FITZURSE. Then tell me who
 and what she is.

BECKET. Art thou so sure thou fol-
 lowedst anything?

Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for
 thine eyes

Glare stupid-wild with wine.

FITZURSE [*making to the door*]. I must and will.

I care not for thy new archbishoprick.

BECKET. Back, man, I tell thee! What!

Shall I forget my new archbishoprick And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?

'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

FITZURSE. It well befits thy new archbishoprick

To take the vagabond woman of the street

Into thine arms!

BECKET. O drunken ribaldry! Out, beast! out, bear!

FITZURSE. I shall remember this.

BECKET. Do, and begone!

[*Exit FITZURSE*]

[*Going to the door, sees DE TRACY*]

Tracy, what dost thou here?

DE TRACY. My lord, I follow'd Reginald Fitzurse.

BECKET. Follow him out!

DE TRACY. I shall remember this Discourtesy.

[*Exit*]

BECKET. Do. These be those baron-brutes

That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.

Rosamund de Clifford.

[*Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT*]

ROSAMUND. Here am I.

BECKET. Why here? We gave thee to the charge of John of Salisbury,

To pass thee to thy secret bower to-morrow.

Wast thou not told to keep thyself from sight?

ROSAMUND. Poor bird of passage! so I was; but, father,

They say that you are wise in winged things,

And know the ways of Nature. Bar the bird

From following the fled summer — a chink — he's out,

Gone! And there stole into the city a breath

Full of the meadows, and it minded me Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the walks

Where I could move at pleasure, and I thought

Lo! I must out or die.

BECKET. Or out *and* die.

And what hast thou to do with this Fitzurse?

ROSAMUND. Nothing. He sued hand. I shook at him.

He found me once alone. Nay — I cannot

Tell you: my father drove him and friends,

De Tracy and De Brito, from our ca I was but fourteen and an April th

I heard him swear revenge.

BECKET. Why will you cou By self-exposure? flutter out at nig

Make it so hard to save a moth from fire?

ROSAMUND. I have saved man 'em. You catch 'em, so,

-Softly, and fling them out to the air.

They burn themselves *within*-door.

BECKET. Our good J

Must speed you to your bower at o

The child

Is there already.

ROSAMUND. Yes — the child — child —

O rare, a whole long day of open fie

BECKET. Ay, but you go disguis

ROSAMUND. O rare ag

We'll baffle them, I warrant. W shall it be?

I'll go as a nun.

BECKET. No.

ROSAMUND. What, not good eno Even to play at nun?

BECKET. Dan John with a r

That Map, and these new railers the Church

May plaister his clean name with s rilous rhymes!

No!

Go like a monk, cowering and cloud up

That fatal star, thy Beauty, from squint

Of lust and glare of malice. G night! good night!

ROSAMUND. Father, I am so ten to all hardness!

Nay, father, first thy blessing.

BECKET. Wedded

ROSAMUND. Fath

BECKET. Well, well! I ask no m Heaven bless thee! hence!

ROSAMUND. O holy father, w thou seest him next,

Command me to thy friend.

BECKET. What friend

ROSAMUND. The Ki

BECKET. Herbert, take out a s of armed men

To guard this bird of passage to cage;

atch Fitzurse, and if he follow
e,
im thy prisoner. I am Chancel-
yet.

[*Exeunt HERBERT and ROSA-
MUND*]

ul! poor soul!
nd, the King! . . . O thou
at Seal of England,
ne by my dear friend the King
England —

g have wrought together, thou
I —

ust I send thee as a common
nd
he King, my friend, I am against

friends no more: he will say
t, not I.

rdly bond between us is dis-
red,

the love: can I be under him
ncellor? as Archbishop over
?

efore like a friend slighted by

th climb'd up to nobler com-
y.

ghted — all but moan'd for:
u must go.

ot dishonour'd thee — I trust I
e not;

ngled justice. May the hand
t next

thee be but as true to thee
hath been! O my dear friend,

King!

er! — I may come to martyr-
a.

artyr in myself already. — Her-
t!

ERT [*re-entering*]. My lord, the
n is quiet, and the moon
the whole long street with light
shade.

tfall — no Fitzurse. We have
n her home.

ET. The hog hath tumbled
self into some corner,

atch, to snore away his drunken-
s

re sober headache, — Nature's
ral

excess. Let the Great Seal be
t

the King to-morrow.

ERT. Must that be?
ng may rend the bearer limb
n limb.

n it again.

ET. Against the moral excess

No physical ache, but failure it may be
Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury
Hath often laid a cold hand on my
heats,

And Herbert hath rebuked me even
now.

I will be wise and wary, not the soldier
As Foliot swears it. — John, and out of
breath!

[*Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY*]

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Thomas, thou
wast not happy taking charge
Of this wild Rosamund to please the
King,

Nor am I happy having charge of her —
The included Danaë has escaped again
Her tower, and her Acrisius — where to
seek?

I have been about the city.

BECKET. Thou wilt find her
Back in her lodging. Go with her — at
once —

To-night — my men will guard you to
the gates.

Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.
Send the Great Seal by daybreak.

Both, good night!

SCENE SECOND. — *Street in Northamp-
ton leading to the Castle.*

[*ELEANOR'S RETAINERS and BECKET'S
RETAINERS fighting. Enter ELEANOR
and BECKET from opposite streets*]

ELEANOR. Peace, fools!

BECKET. Peace, friends! what idle
brawl is this?

RETAINER OF BECKET. They said —
her Grace's people — thou wast
found —

Liars! I shame to quote 'em — caught,
my lord,

With a wanton in thy lodging — Hell
require 'em!

RETAINER OF ELEANOR. My liege,
the Lord Fitzurse reported this
In passing the Castle even now.

RETAINER OF BECKET. And then
they mock'd us and we fell upon
'em,

For we would live and die for thee, my
lord,

However kings and queens may frown
on thee.

BECKET. [*To his RETAINERS*] Go, go
— no more of this!

ELEANOR. [*To her RETAINERS*]
Away! — [*Exeunt RETAINERS*]
Fitzurse —

BECKET. Nay, let him be.

ELEANOR. No, no, my Lord Archbishop,

'Tis known you are midwinter to all women,

But often in your chancellorship you served

The follies of the King.

BECKET. No, not these follies!

ELEANOR. My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in your lodging.

BECKET. Whom?

ELEANOR. Well — you know — the minion, Rosamund.

BECKET. He had good eyes!

ELEANOR. Then hidden in the street He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury

And heard her cry 'Where is this bower of mine?'

BECKET. Good ears too!

ELEANOR. You are going to the Castle,

Will you subscribe the customs?

BECKET. I leave that, Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,

My liege, to your conjecture.

ELEANOR. I and mine — And many a baron holds along with me —

Are not so much at feud with Holy Church

But we might take your side against the customs —

So that you grant me one slight favour.

BECKET. What?

ELEANOR. A sight of that same chart which Henry gave you

With the red line — 'her bower.'

BECKET. And to what end?

ELEANOR. That Church must scorn herself whose fearful Priest

Sits winking at the license of a king, Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous

The Church must play into the hands of kings;

Look! I would move this wanton from his sight

And take the Church's danger on myself.

BECKET. For which she should be duly grateful.

ELEANOR. True!

Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see

That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.

BECKET. Ay, Madam, and queens also.

ELEANOR. And queens also!

What is your drift?

BECKET. My drift is to the Ca

Where I shall meet the Barons and King.

[DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BR

DE MORVILLE (*passing*)]

ELEANOR. To the Castle?

DE BROC. Ay!

ELEANOR. Stir up the King, Lords!

Set all on fire against him!

DE BRITO. Ay, good Mad

ELEANOR. Fool! I will make hateful to thy King.

Churl! I will have thee frightened France,

And I shall live to trample on thy gr

SCENE THIRD.—*The Hall in Northampton Castle.*

[On one side of the stage the doors of inner Council-chamber, half-open. At the bottom, the great doors of Hall. ROGER ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP OF LONDON, HILARY OF CHICHESTER, BISHOP OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE HILARYS (*Grand Prior of Temple*), PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA (*the Poor Almoner*), and others. DE BROC, FITZURSE, DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE, DE TRACY, and other BARONS assembled — a table before them. JOHN OF OXFORD, President of Council.]

[Enter BECKET and HERBERT BOSHAM]

BECKET. Where is the King?

ROGER OF YORK. Gone hawking the Nene,

His heart so gall'd with thine ingratitude,

He will not see thy face till thou sign'd

These ancient laws and customs of realm.

Thy sending back the Great Seal m

den'd him,

He all but pluck'd the bearer's away.

Take heed, lest he destroy thee utterly

BECKET. Then shalt thou step in my place and sign.

R OF YORK. Didst thou not
 nise Henry to obey
 ncient laws and customs of the
 m?

ET. Saving the honour of my
 er — ay.

, traditions, — clouds that come
 go;

oms of the Church are Peter's

R OF YORK. Saving thine order!
 King Henry sware

aving his King's kingship, he
 ld grant thee

wn itself. Saving thine order,
 mas,

and white at once, and comes
 aught.

r'd up with stubbornness and
 e,

u destroy the Church in fight-
 for it,

g us all to shame?

ET. Roger of York,
 and thou were youths in Theo-

's house,
 d thy malice and thy calumnies

e from the face of Theobald.

am Canterbury and thou art
 k.

R OF YORK. And is not York
 peer of Canterbury?

Great Gregory bid St. Austin

wo archbishopricks, London and
 k?

ET. What came of that? The
 archbishop fled,

rk lay barren for a hundred
 rs.

this rule, Foliot may claim the
 don too.

r. And with good reason too,
 don had a temple and a priest

anterbury hardly bore a name.

ET. The pagan temple of a
 an Rome!

then priesthood of a heathen
 d!

est beyond thyself in petulancy!
 de thee London? Who, but

terbury?

OF OXFORD. Peace, peace, my
 s! these customs are no longer

terbury calls them, wandering
 ds,

he King's command are written
 n,
 the King's command I, John of
 ord,

The President of this Council, read
 them.

BECKET. Read!

JOHN OF OXFORD [reads]. 'All causes
 of advowsons and presentations, whether
 between laymen or clerics, shall be tried
 in the King's court.'

BECKET. But that I cannot sign: for
 that would drag

The cleric before the civil judgment-
 seat,

And on a matter wholly spiritual.

JOHN OF OXFORD. 'If any cleric be
 accused of felony, the Church shall not
 protect him; but he shall answer to the
 summons of the King's court to be tried
 therein.'

BECKET. And that I cannot sign.
 Is not the Church the visible Lord on

earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord be
 bound

Behind the back like laymen-criminals?
 The Lord be judged again by Pilate?

No!

JOHN OF OXFORD. 'When a bishop-
 rick falls vacant, the King, till another
 be appointed, shall receive the revenues
 thereof.'

BECKET. And that I cannot sign.
 Is the King's treasury

A fit place for the monies of the Church,
 That be the patrimony of the poor?

JOHN OF OXFORD. 'And when the
 vacancy is to be filled up, the King shall
 summon the chapter of that church to

court, and the election shall be made in
 the Chapel Royal, with the consent of

our lord the King, and by the advice of
 his Government.'

BECKET. And that I cannot sign:
 for that would make

Our island-Church a schism from Chris-
 tendom,

And weight down all free choice beneath
 the throne.

FOLIOT. And was thine own election
 so canonical,

Good father?

BECKET. If it were not, Gilbert
 Foliot,

I mean to cross the sea to France, and
 lay

My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,
 And bid him re-create me, Gilbert

Foliot.

FOLIOT. Nay; by another of these
 customs thou

Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas
 Without the license of our lord the King.

BECKET. That, too, I cannot sign.

[DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY,
FITZURSE, DE MORVILLE, *start*
up — a clash of swords]

LORDS. Sign and obey!

BECKET. My lords, is this a combat
or a council?

Are ye my masters, or my lord the
King?

Ye make this clashing for no love o'
the customs

Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call
them,

But that there be among you those that
hold

Lands reft from Canterbury.

DE BROC. And mean to keep them,
In spite of thee!

LORDS [*shouting*]. Sign, and obey the
crown!

BECKET. The crown? Shall I do
less for Canterbury

Than Henry for the crown? King Ste-
phen gave

Many of the crown lands to those that
helpt him;

So did Matilda, the King's mother.
Mark,

When Henry came into his own again,
Then he took back not only Stephen's

gifts,
But his own mother's, lest the crown
should be

Shorn of ancestral splendour. This did
Henry.

Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?
And thou, De Broc, that holdest Salt-

wood Castle —

DE BROC. And mean to hold it,
or —

BECKET. To have my life.

DE BROC. The King is quick to
anger; if thou anger him,

We wait but the King's word to strike
thee dead.

BECKET. Strike, and I die the death
of martyrdom;

Strike, and ye set these customs by my
death

Ringin' their own death-knell thro' all
the realm.

HERBERT. And I can tell you, lords,
ye are all as like

To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's
heart

As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

JOHN OF OXFORD. Ay, sheathe your
swords, ye will displease the King.

DE BROC. Why down then thou!
but an he come to Saltwood,

By God's death, thou shalt stick him
like a calf! [*Sheathing his sword*]

HILARY. O my good lord, I do
treat thee — sign.

Save the King's honour here before
barons.

He hath sworn that thou shouldst
and now but shuns

The semblance of defeat; I have
him say

He means no more; so if thou sign
lord,

That were but as the shadow o'
assent.

BECKET. 'Twould seem too like
substance, if I sign'd.

PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA. My
thine ear! I have the ear of

Pope.

As thou hast honour for the Pope
master,

Have pity on him, sorely prest upon
By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope

Thou knowest he was forced to fly
France;

He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify
Thy King; for if thou go against

King,
Then must he likewise go against

King,
And then thy King might join the
pope,

And that would shake the Papacy
stands.

Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals
He meant no harm nor damage to

Church.

Smooth thou his pride — thy sign
but form;

Nay, and should harm come of it,
the Pope

Will be to blame — not thou. Over
over

He told me thou shouldst pacify
King,

Lest there be battle between Heaven
and Earth,

And Earth should get the better —
the time.

Cannot the Pope absolve thee if
sign?

BECKET. Have I the orders of
Holy Father?

PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA. Orders
lord — why, no; for what am I?

The secret whisper of the Holy Father
Thou, that hast been a statesman,
couldst thou always

Blurt thy free mind to the air?

BECKET. If Rome be feeble,
should I be firm.

PHILIP. Take it not that way
balk not the Pope's will.

hath shaken off the Emperor,
 ds the Church against the King
 h thee.

ARD DE HASTINGS [*kneeling*].
 Becket I am the oldest of the
 mplars;

thy father; he would be mine

lived now; think of me as thy
 her!

thy father kneeling to thee,
 Becket.

; I promise thee on my salva-

thou wilt hear no more o' the
 customs.

ET. What!

Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd
 h him?

HER TEMPLAR [*kneeling*]. Father,
 m the youngest of the Templars,

n me as I were thy bodily son,
 ke a son, I lift my hands to

ee.

RP. Wilt thou hold out for ever,
 omas Becket?

ou not hear?

ET [*signs*]. Why — there then
 there — I sign,

ear to obey the customs.

OT. Is it thy will,
 d Archbishop, that we too should

n?

ET. O ay, by that canonical
 edience

ill hast owed thy father, Gilbert
 liot.

OT. Loyally and with good
 th, my lord Archbishop?

ET. O ay, with all that loyalty
 d good faith

still hast shown thy primate,
 lbert Foliot.

BECKET *draws apart with HER-*
BERT]

t, Herbert, have I betray'd the
 urch?

re the paper back — blot out my
 me.

BERT. Too late, my lord: you
 o they are signing there.

ET. False to myself — it is the
 ll of God

ak me, prove me nothing of my-
 f!

amoner hath tasted Henry's gold.
 ardinale have finger'd Henry's

ld.
 ome is venal ev'n to rottenness.
 , I see it.
 o soldier, as he said — at least

No leader. Herbert, till I hear from
 the Pope

I will suspend myself from all my func-

tions.

If fast and prayer, the lacerating
 scourge —

FOLIOT [*from the table*]. My lord
 Archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.

BECKET. First, Foliot, let me see
 what I have sign'd.

[*Goes to the table*]
 What, this! and this! — what! new

and old together!

Seal? If a seraph shouted from the
 sun,

And bade me seal against the rights of
 the Church,

I would anathematise him. I will not
 seal. [*Exit with HERBERT*]

[*Enter KING HENRY*]

HENRY. Where's Thomas? hath he
 sign'd? show me the papers!

Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

JOHN OF OXFORD. He would not seal.
 And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-

red —

Shame, wrath, I know not what. He
 sat down there

And dropt it in his hands, and then a
 paleness,

Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept
 Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,

'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

HENRY. God's will be what it will,
 the man shall seal,

Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's
 son —

Nay, if I cannot break him as the pre-

late,

I'll crush him as the subject. Send for
 him back. [*Sits on his throne*]

Barons and bishops of our realm of Eng-

land,

After the nineteen winters of King
 Stephen —

A reign which was no reign, when none
 could sit

By his own hearth in peace; when mur-

der common

As nature's death, like Egypt's plague,
 had fill'd

All things with blood; when every door-

way blush'd,

Dash'd red with that unhallow'd pass-

over;

When every baron ground his blade in
 blood;

The household dough was kneaded up
 with blood;

The mill wheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plow
 Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,
 Till famine dwarft the race — I came, your King!
 Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,
 In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears
 The flatteries of corruption — went abroad
 Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;
 Yea, heard the churl against the baron — yea,
 And did him justice; sat in mine own courts
 Judging my judges, that had found a King
 Who ranged confusions, made the twilight day.
 And struck a shape from out the vague, and law
 From madness. And the event — our fallows till'd,
 Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.
 So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,
 Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly
 Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated
 The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.
 Bishops — York, London, Chichester, Westminster —
 Ye haled this tonsured devil into your courts;
 But since your canon will not let you take
 Life for a life, ye but degraded him
 Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder care
 For degradation? and that made me muse,
 Being bounden by my coronation oath
 To do men justice. Look to it, your own selves!
 Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,
 What could ye do? Degrade, imprison him —
 Not death for death.

JOHN OF OXFORD. But I, my liege, could swear,
 To death for death.

HENRY. And, looking thro' my reign,
 I found a hundred ghastly murders done
 By men, the scum and offal of the Church;

Then, glancing thro' the story of
 realm,
 I came on certain wholesome usage
 Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's
 Good royal customs — had them
 ten fair

For John of Oxford here to read
 you.

JOHN OF OXFORD. And I can
 swear to these as being
 The King's will and God's will
 justice; yet

I could but read a part to-day
 cause —

FITZURSE. Because my lord of
 terbury —

DE TRACY. Ay,
 This lord of Canterbury —

DE BRITO. As is his
 Too much of late whene'er your
 rights

Are mooted in our councils —

FITZURSE. — made an up

HENRY. And Becket had my b
 on all this;

If ever man by bonds of gratefulne
 I raised him from the puddle o
 gutter,

I made him porcelain from the cl
 the city —

Thought that I knew him, err'd
 love of him,

Hoped, were he chosen archbi
 Church and Crown,

Two sisters gliding in an equal dar

Two rivers gently flowing side
 side —

But no!

The bird that moults sings the
 song again,

The snake that sloughs comes c
 snake again.

Snake — ay, but he that lookt a fa
 one,

Issues a venomous adder.

For he, when having dofft the C
 cellor's robe —

Flung the Great Seal of England i
 face —

Claim'd some of our crown land
 Canterbury —

My comrade, boon companion, m
 reveller,

The master of his master, the K
 king. —

God's eyes! I had meant to make
 all but king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might
 have sway'd

All England under Henry, the y
 King,

was hence. What did the
or say?
himself, but ten-fold false to

of God — why, then it is my
—
ing?

NGER [entering]. With a crowd
rshippers,
s his cross before him thro'
dowd,
at puts himself in sanctuary.

His cross!
OF YORK. His cross! I'll
him, cross to cross.

[Exit ROGER OF YORK]

His cross! it is the traitor
mputes
to his King!
afe for me to look upon him.
with me!

*es in with his BARONS to the
Council-Chamber, the door of
which is left open]*

CKET, holding his cross of silver
him. The BISHOPS come
him]

RD. The King will not abide
with thy cross.

, my good lord, to bear it for

chaplain.

No: it must protect me.

T. As once he bore the stand-
the Angles,
e bears the standard of the

I am the Dean of the
ace: let me bear it.

thy King a traitorous mur-

Did not your barons draw
swords against me?

GER OF YORK, with his cross,
dvancing to BECKET]

Wherefore dost thou pre-
to bear thy cross,
he solemn ordinance from

province?

OF YORK. Why dost thou
ne,
h thy cross, to come before
ing?

ury bring his cross to court,
ear his to mate with Canter-

FOLIOT [seizing hold of BECKET'S
cross]. Nay, nay, my lord, thou
must not brave the King.

Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

BECKET. Away!

[Flinging him off]

FOLIOT. He fasts, they say, this
mitred Hercules!

He fast! is that an arm of fast? My
lord,

Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone
along with thee;

But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the
sheep,

And thou art perjured, and thou wilt
not seal.

As Chancellor thou wast against the
Church,

Now as Archbishop goest against the
King;

For, like a fool, thou knowst no middle
way.

Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the
King?

BECKET. Strong — not in mine own
self, but Heaven; true

To either function, holding it; and thou
Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy
flesh,

Not spirit — thou remainest Gilbert
Foliot,

A worldly follower of the worldly strong.
I, bearing this great ensign, make it
clear

Under what Prince I fight.

FOLIOT. My lord of York,

Let us go in to the Council, where our
bishops

And our great lords will sit in judgment
on him.

BECKET. Sons sit in judgment on
their father! — then

The spire of Holy Church may prick the
graves —

Her crypt among the stars. Sign?
seal? I promised

The King to obey these customs, not
yet written,

Saving mine order; true too, that when
written

I sign'd them — being a fool, as Foliot
call'd me.

I hold not by my signing. Get ye
hence,

Tell what I say to the King.

[Exeunt HEREFORD, FOLIOT, and
other BISHOPS]

ROGER OF YORK. The Church
will hate thee. [Exit]

BECKET. Serve my best friend and
make him my worst foe;

Fight for the Church, and set the Church against me!

HERBERT. To be honest is to set all knaves against thee.

Ah! Thomas, excommunicate them all!

HEREFORD [*re-entering*]. I cannot brook the turmoil thou hast raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canterbury,

Thou wert plain Thomas and not Canterbury,

Or that thou wouldst deliver Canterbury To our King's hands again, and be at peace.

HILARY [*re-entering*]. For hath not thine ambition set the Church

This day between the hammer and the anvil —

Fealty to the King, obedience to thyself?

HERBERT. What say the bishops?

HILARY. Some have pleaded for him,

But the King rages — most are with the King;

And some are reeds, that one time sway to the current,

And to the wind another. But we hold Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn Archbishop

Shall helm the Church. We therefore place ourselves

Under the shield and safeguard of the Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the Pope, And answer thine accusers. . . . Art thou deaf?

BECKET. I hear you.

[*Clash of arms*]

HILARY. Dost thou hear those others?

BECKET. Ay!

ROGER OF YORK [*re-entering*]. The King's 'God's eyes!' come now so thick and fast,

We fear that he may reave thee of thine own.

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us To see the proud Archbishop mutilated. Say that he blind thee and tear out thy tongue.

BECKET. So be it. He begins at top with me:

They crucified St. Peter downward.

ROGER OF YORK.

But for their sake who stagger betwixt thine

Appeal, and Henry's anger, yield.

BECKET.

Hence, Satan!

[*Exit ROGER OF YORK*]

FITZURSE [*re-entering*]. My lord, the

King demands three hundred marks,

Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and Eye

When thou thereof wast warden.

BECKET. Tell th

I spent thrice that in fortifying castles.

DE TRACY [*re-entering*]. My lord King demands seven hundred marks,

Lent at the siege of Thoulouse.

BECKET. I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.

DE BRITO [*re-entering*]. My lord King demands five hundred marks.

Advanced thee at his instance.

Jews,

For which the King was bound to me.

BECKET. I thought it was a gift. I thought it was a gift.

[*Enter LORD LEICESTER, followed by*

BARONS and BISHOPS]

LEICESTER. My lord, I come willingly. The King

Demands a strict account of all revenues

From all the vacant sees and abbacies

Which came into thy hands when thou wast cellor.

BECKET. How much might I have

LEICESTER. Some thirty — thousand silver marks.

BECKET. Are these your own? O my good lord Leicester,

The King and I were brothers. I had

I lavish'd for the glory of the King. I shone from him, for him, his glory

Reflection: now the glory of the King. Hath swallow'd up the glory of

King;

I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day

To ponder these demands.

LEICESTER. Hear first thy sentence. The King and all his lords —

BECKET. Son, first hear me.

LEICESTER. Nay, nay, cannot. That holdest thine estates

In fee and barony of the King, demand the judgment of the King?

BECKET. The King!

Nothing in fee and barony of the King. Whatever the Church owns — she

it in

Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to any earthly sceptre.

ER. Nay, but hear thy judge —
and all his barons —
Judgment! Barons!
the bridegroom dares to judge
side,
the bridegroom may appoint?
of the house, but from the
with the mire thereof.

I had been so true
and mine office that the King
rone me in the great Arch-
rick:
at knew mine own infirmity,
King's pleasure rather than
cause
pon me — err'd thro' love of
efore God from me withdraws
elf,
ing too.
What! forty thousand marks!
a, the King, the Pope, the
t, the world,
t when made Archbishop I
eed,
Prince and chief Justiciary,
y bond and debt and obliga-
s Chancellor.

Hear me, son.

As gold
dross, light darkness, Abel
he body, and the Church the
e,
ee, upon pain of mine anath-
obey, not me, but God in me,
an Henry. I refuse to stand
ng's censure, make my cry to
ope,
I will be judged; refer myself,
these customs, all the Church,
a,
r his authority — I depart.

[Going]
ICESTER looks at him doubt-
ngly]
isoner?

ER. By St. Lazarus, no!
ounded by thee. Go in peace.
C. In peace now — but after.
that for earnest.
ngs a bone at him from the
ushes]
TO, FITZURSE, DE TRACY, and
nging wisps of rushes]. Ay,
ce, caitiff, caitiff! And that

too, perjured prelate — and that, turn-
coat shaveling! There, there, there!
traitor, traitor, traitor!

BECKET. Mannerless wolves!

[Turning and facing them]

HERBERT. Enough, my lord, enough!

BECKET. Barons of England and of
Normandy,

When what ye shake at doth but seem
to fly,

True test of coward, ye follow with a
yell.

But I that threw the mightiest knight
of France,

Sir Engelram de Trie, —

HERBERT. Enough, my lord.

BECKET. More than enough. I play
the fool again.

[Enter HERALD]

HERALD. The King commands you,
upon pain of death,
That none should wrong or injure your
Archbishop.

FOLIOT. Deal gently with the young
man Absalom.

[Great doors of the Hall at the
back open, and discover a
crowd. They shout:]

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of
the Lord!

SCENE FOURTH. — *Refectory of the
Monastery at Northampton.*

[A banquet on the Tables]

[Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS]

1ST RETAINER. Do thou speak first.

2ND RETAINER. Nay, thou! Nay,
thou! Hast not thou drawn the short
straw?

1ST RETAINER. My lord Archbishop,
wilt thou permit us —

BECKET. To speak without stammer-
ing and like a free man? Ay.

1ST RETAINER. My lord, permit us
then to leave thy service.

BECKET. When?

1ST RETAINER. Now.

BECKET. To-night?

1ST RETAINER. To-night, my lord.

BECKET. And why?

1ST RETAINER. My lord, we leave
thee not without tears.

BECKET. Tears? Why not stay
with me then?

1ST RETAINER. My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

BECKET. I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

1ST RETAINER. That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

BECKET. No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

1ST RETAINER. And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

BECKET. God bless you all! God redden your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to Heaven, my God bless you, that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

1ST RETAINER. We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell!

[*Exeunt RETAINERS*]

BECKET. Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night?

[*Knocking at the door*]

ATTENDANT. Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

BECKET. Cornwall's hand or Leicester's: they write marvellously alike.

[*Reading*]

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France: there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

ATTENDANT. Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

BECKET. And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

HERBERT. That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

BECKET. And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church

is ever at variance with the King, ever at one with the poor. a group of lazars in the market — half-rag, half-sore — beggarly rogues (Heaven bless 'em) who saw nor dreamed of such a day. I will amaze them. Call them! They shall henceforward be lords and barons — our lords and in Christ Jesus. [*Exit*]

If the King hold his purple myself a beggar. Forty marks! forty thousand devils these craven bishops!

[*Enter a POOR MAN with a staff*]

MAN. My lord Archbishop, come in with my poor friend, The King's verdurer caught him in the forest, and cut off his head. The dog followed his calling, my lord, ha' carried him ever so many miles, and he licks my face and cries out against the King.

BECKET. Better thy dog to the King's courts would use thee than thy dog — they are too good for thee. Were the Church king, it would otherwise. Poor beast! poor dog, set him down. I will bind his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! What a dog would misuse a child — not speak for themselves. Poor dog, his paws are past help. God bless thee!

[*Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables). BECKET calls to HERBERT wait upon them*]

1ST BEGGAR. Swine, shee here's a French supper. What fall out, honest men —

2ND BEGGAR. Is the Archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

1ST BEGGAR. Well, then, is it go? When honest men are thieves — no, it can't be that.

2ND BEGGAR. Who stole the one sitting hen o' Sunday, when it was at mass?

1ST BEGGAR. Come, come, hadst thy share on her. Sit down. Our Lord Becket's our great sin-eater, cock, and we shouldn't ha' been here if the barons and bishops weren't a-sitting on the Archbishop's shoulders.

BECKET. Ay, the princes' sin against me, and the Lord be prepared your table — *Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

DICE. Becket, beware of the

ET. Who spoke?

BEGGAR. Nobody, my lord. That, my lord?

ET. Venison.

BEGGAR. Venison?

ET. Buck; deer, as you call it.

BEGGAR. King's meat! By the

on't we pray for your lordship!

ET. And, my children, your

will do more for me in the day

that dawns darkly and drearly

the house of God — yea, and in the

judgment also, than the swords of

ven sycophants would have done

my remained true to me whose

they have partaken. I must leave

your banquet. Feed, feast, and

y. Herbert, for the sake of the

itself, if not for my own, I must

rance to-night. Come with me.

[Exit with HERBERT]

BEGGAR. Here — all of you —

's health. [They drink] Well —

isn't goodly wine —

BEGGAR. Then there isn't a

wench to serve him with it:

ere fighting for her to-day in the

BEGGAR. Peace!

BEGGAR. The black sheep baaed

the miller's ewe-lamb,

miller's away for to-night.

sheep, quoth she, too black a sin

me.

what said the black sheep, my

??

an make a black sin white.

BEGGAR. Peace!

BEGGAR. 'Ewe lamb, ewe lamb,

m here by the dam.'

the miller came home that night,

dusted his back with the meal in

sack,

he made the black sheep white.

BEGGAR. Be we not of the

be we not a-supping with the

f the family? be we not in my

own refractory? Out from among

ou art our black sheep.

[Enter the four KNIGHTS]

URSE. Sheep, said he? And

without the shepherd, too. Where

ord Archbishop? Thou the lusti-

l lousiest of this Cain's brother-

answer.

BEGGAR. With Cain's answer,

rd. Am I his keeper? Thou

st call him Cain, not me.

FITZURSE. So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

3RD BEGGAR [rising and advancing].

No, my lord; but because the Lord hath

set his mark upon him that no man

should murder him.

FITZURSE. Where is he? where is

he?

3RD BEGGAR. With Cain belike, in

the land of Nod, or in the land of France

for aught I know.

FITZURSE. France! Ha! De Mor-

ville, Tracy, Brito — fled is he? Cross

swords all of you! swear to follow him!

Remember the Queen!

[The four KNIGHTS cross their swords]

DE BRITO. They mock us; he is

here.

[All the BEGGARS rise and advance upon them]

FITZURSE. Come, you filthy knaves,

let us pass.

3RD BEGGAR. Nay, my lord, let us

pass. We be a-going home after our

supper in all humbleness, my lord; for

the Archbishop loves humbleness, my

lord; and though we be fifty to four, we

daren't fight you with our crutches, my

lord. There now, if thou hast not laid

hands upon me! and my fellows know

that I am all one scale like a fish. I

pray God I haven't given thee my

leprosy, my lord.

[FITZURSE shrinks from him and another presses upon DE BRITO]

DE BRITO. Away, dog!

4TH BEGGAR. And I was bit by a

mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog

already by this token, that tho' I can

drink wine I cannot bide water, my

lord; and I want to bite, I want to

bite, and they do say the very breath

catches.

DE BRITO. Insolent clown! Shall I

smite him with the edge of the sword?

DE MORVILLE. No, nor with the

flat of it either. Smite the shepherd

and the sheep are scattered. Smite the

sheep and the shepherd will excom-

municate thee.

DE BRITO. Yet my fingers itch to

beat him into nothing.

5TH BEGGAR. So do mine, my lord.

I was born with it, and sulphur won't

bring it out o' me. But for all that the

Archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday.

He likes it, my lord.

6TH BEGGAR. And see here, my

lord, this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg.

It's humbling — it smells o' human

natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the Archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

DE MORVILLE. Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back, BEGGARS following*]

7TH BEGGAR. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating-sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

8TH BEGGAR. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along wi' me, for the Archbishop likes it, my lord.

[*Pressing upon the KNIGHTS till they disappear thro' the door*]

3RD BEGGAR. Crutches, and itches, and leprosies, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our Archbishop!

1ST BEGGAR. I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

HERBERT OF BOSHAM [*entering*]. My friends, the Archbishop bids you good night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

3RD BEGGAR. So we will — so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

ACT II

SCENE FIRST. — ROSAMUND'S Bower.

A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.

Voices heard singing among the trees.

DUET

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.

1. Is there a voice coming up
voice of the deep from the
One coming up with a song
flush of the glimmering re-
2. Love that is born of the deep
up with the sun from the s
1. Love that can shape or can s
life till the life shall have f
2. Nay, let us welcome him, L
can lift up a life from the
1. Keep him away from the lo
isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his o
him reign in it — he, it is
Love that is born of the deep
up with the sun from the

[*Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND*]

ROSAMUND. Be friends wi
again — I do beseech thee.

HENRY. With Becket? I h
one hour with thee —

Sceptre and crozier clashing,
mitre

Grappling the crown — and wh
from this

For a gasp of freer air, a br
while

To rest upon thy bosom and
him —

Why thou, my bird, thou pipest
Becket —

Yea, thou my golden dream o
own bower,

Must be the nightmare breaking
peace

With 'Becket.'

ROSAMUND. O my life's life
smile

Is all but death to me. My
cloud!

Let there not be one frown in
hour.

Out of the many thine, let this
Look rather thou all-royal as w

I met thee.

HENRY. Where was that?

ROSAMUND. Forgett

Forgets me too.

HENRY. Nay, I remember
There on the moors.

ROSAMUND. And in a narro
A plover flew before thee. The

Thy high black steed among the
furze,

Like sudden night in the main
day.

And from that height someth
said to me

I knew not what.

I ask'd the way.
 I think so.
 Thou wast too shamed to
 Too scared — so young!
 The rosebud of my rose! —
 Well, no more of *him* — I have
 all his belongings, overseas,
 orphans, and babe-breasting
 others — all
 hundreds to him — there to beg,
 live, die —
 the fool King Louis feed them
 I shall feel that I can strike
 yet.
 Babes, orphans, mothers!
 That royal, Sir?
 And I have been as royal
 in the Church.
 ter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny.
 wore his time studying the canon
 k it against me. But since he
 sed
 nds at Veselay, I have let them
 ow,
 they keep him longer as their
 est,
 r all their cowls to all the hells.
 And is that altogether
 al?
 Traitress!
 A faithful traitress to
 y royal fame.
 Fame! what care I for
 ne? Spite, ignorance, envy,
 onesty too, paint her what way
 y will.
 of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
 of to-day is fame to-morrow;
 ound and round again. What
 atters? Royal —
 to leave the royalty of my crown
 en'd to mine heirs.
 Still — thy fame too:
 hat should be royal.
 And I say,
 not for thy saying.
 And I say,
 not for *thy* saying. A greater
 ing
 hou art, Love, who cares not for
 e word,
 'care not' — care. There have I
 oken true?
 Care dwell with me for ever,
 en I cease
 e for thee as ever!

ROSAMUND. No need! no need! . . .
 There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit?
 My bank
 Of wild-flowers. [*He sits*] At thy feet!
 [*She sits at his feet*]
 HENRY. I bade them clear
 A royal pleasance for thee, in the wood,
 Not leave these countryfolk at court.
 ROSAMUND. I brought them
 In from the wood, and set them here.
 I love them
 More than the garden flowers, that seem
 at most
 Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half
 speaking
 The language of the land. I love *them*
 too,
 Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all
 the roses —
 Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's
 name —
 This wild one [*picking a briar-rose*] —
 nay, I shall not prick myself —
 Is sweetest. Do but smell!
 HENRY. Thou rose of the world!
 Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering*]
 I am not worthy of her — this beast-
 body
 That God has plunged my soul in — I,
 that taking
 The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so
 long
 Have wander'd among women, — a foul
 stream
 Thro' fever-breeding levels, — at her
 side,
 Among these happy dales, run clearer,
 drop
 The mud I carried, like yon brook, and
 glass
 The faithful face of heaven —
 [*Looking at her, and unconsciously
 aloud*]
 — thine! thine!
 ROSAMUND. I know it.
 HENRY [*muttering*]. Not hers. We
 have but one bond, her hate of
 Becket.
 ROSAMUND [*half hearing*]. Nay! nay!
 what art thou muttering? I hate
 Becket?
 HENRY [*muttering*]. A sane and
 natural loathing for a soul
 Purer, and truer and nobler than her-
 self;
 And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,
 A bastard hate born of a former love.
 ROSAMUND. My fault to name him!
 O let the hand of one
 To whom thy voice is all her music,
 stay it

But for a breath.

[*Puts her hand before his lips*]

Speak only of thy love.

Why there — like some loud beggar at thy gate —

The happy boldness of this hand hath won it

Love's alms, thy kiss [*looking at her hand*]
— Sacred! I'll kiss it too.

[*Kissing it*]

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it? Nay,

There may be crosses in my line of life.

HENRY. Not half *her* hand — no hand to mate with *her*,

If it should come to that.

ROSAMUND. With *her*? with whom?

HENRY. Life on the hand is naked gipsy-stuff;

Life on the face, the brows — clear innocence!

Vein'd marble — not a furrow yet — and hers

[*Muttering*]

Crosted and recrosted, a venomous spider's web —

ROSAMUND [*springing up*]. Out of the cloud, my Sun — out of the eclipse

Narrowing my golden hour!

HENRY. O Rosamund,

I would be true — would tell thee all — and something

I had to say — I love thee none the less —

Which will so vex thee.

ROSAMUND. Something against *me*?

HENRY. No, no, against myself.

ROSAMUND. I will not hear it.

Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for mine hour.

I'll call thee little Geoffrey.

HENRY. Call him!

ROSAMUND. Geoffrey!

[*Enter GEOFFREY*]

HENRY. How the boy grows!

ROSAMUND. Ay, and his brows are thine;

The mouth is only Clifford, my dear father.

GEOFFREY. My liege, what hast thou brought me?

HENRY. Venal imp!

What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of England?

GEOFFREY. O yes, my liege.

HENRY. 'O yes, my liege!' He speaks

As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be Chancellor of England?

GEOFFREY. Something good wouldst not give it me.

HENRY. It is, my boy, to see the King when Chancellor, and be made Archbishop and go against King who made him, and turn the upside down.

GEOFFREY. I won't have Nay, but give it me, and I promise not to turn the world upside down.

HENRY [*giving him a ball*]. Ball, my boy, thy world, to turn and play with as thou wilt — more than I can do with mine. it, play.

[*Exit GEOFFREY*]

A pretty lusty boy.

ROSAMUND. So like

Like to be liker.

HENRY. Not in my chin, That threatens double.

ROSAMUND. Thou art perfect.

HENRY. Ay, ay, no doubt; and I humpt behind,

Thou'dst say as much — the way of women

Who love, for which I love them God grant

No ill befall on him or thee who Am gone.

ROSAMUND. Is *he* thy enemy

HENRY. He? why

ROSAMUND. Thine enemy know secret of my bower.

HENRY. And I could tear asunder with wild horses

Before he would betray it. No fear!

More like is he to excommunicate

ROSAMUND. And I would crawl over knife-edge flint

Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to hand

Before he flash'd the bolt.

HENRY. And when he f Shrink from me, like a daughter Church.

ROSAMUND. Ay, but he will

HENRY. Ay! but if

ROSAMUND. O then! O the almost fear to say

That my poor heretic heart would communicate

His excommunication, clinging to Closer than ever.

HENRY [*raising ROSAMUND and ing her*]. My brave-heart! Hath he ever been to see thee?

ROSAMUND. Here?

And it is so lonely here — no sor.

RY. Thou shalt confess all thy
sins to me.

MUND. Besides, we came away
such a heat,
right not ev'n my crucifix.

RY. Take this.
[Giving her the Crucifix which
ELEANOR gave him]

MUND. O beautiful! May I
have it as mine, till mine
be again?

RY [throwing it round her neck].
Mine — as I am — till death!

MUND. Death? no! I'll have
with me in my shroud,
take with it, and show it to all the
saints.

RY. Nay — I must go; but
when thou layest thy lip
on, remembering One who died for
us,

remember also one who lives for thee
here in France; for I must hence
brave
the Pope, King Louis, and this turbu-
lent priest.

MUND [kneeling]. O by thy love
for me, all mine for thee,
put thy soul into the flames of hell:
I'll be to thee — be friends with him
in sin.

RY. Look, look! if little Geof-
frey have not tost

me into the brook! makes after it

me. Why, the child will drown
himself.

MUND. Geoffrey! Geoffrey!
[Exit]

SCENE SECOND. — *Montmirail.*

Meeting of the Kings." JOHN OF
OXFORD and HENRY. Crowd in the
distance]

JOHN OF OXFORD. You have not
crown'd young Henry yet, my
nephew?

RY. Crown'd! by God's eyes,
I will not have him crown'd.

JOHN OF OXFORD. Of late to the boy, he answer'd

me, he wore the crown already — No,
I will not have him crown'd.

JOHN OF OXFORD. What Becket told me, that the
other

will make him play his kingship
against mine.

JOHN OF OXFORD. Not have him
crown'd?

HENRY. Not now — not yet! and
Becket —

Becket should crown him were he
crown'd at all:

But, since we would be lord of our own
manor,

This Canterbury, like a wounded deer,
Has fled our presence and our feeding-
grounds.

JOHN OF OXFORD. Cannot a smooth
tongue lick him whole again
To serve your will?

HENRY. He hates my will, not me.

JOHN OF OXFORD. There's York, my
liege.

HENRY. But England scarce would
hold

Young Henry king, if only crown'd by
York,

And that would stilt up York to twice
himself.

There is a movement yonder in the
crowd —

See if our pious — what shall I call him,
John? —

Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn suze-
rain,

Be yet within the field.

JOHN OF OXFORD. I will. [Exit]

HENRY. Ay! Ay!

Mince and go back! his politic Holiness
hath all but climb'd the Roman perch
again,

And we shall hear him presently with
clapt wing

Crow over Barbarossa — at last tongue-
free

To blast my realms with excommunica-
tion

And interdict. I must patch up a
peace —

A piece in this long-tugged-at, thread-
bare-worn

Quarrel of Crown and Church — to rend
again.

His Holiness cannot steer straight thro'
shoals,

Nor I. The citizen's heir hath con-
quer'd me

For the moment. So we make our
peace with him.

[Enter LOUIS]

Brother of France, what shall be done
with Becket?

LOUIS. The holy Thomas! Brother,
you have traffick'd

Between the Emperor and the Pope,
between

The Pope and Antipope — a perilous game

For men to play with God.

HENRY. Ay, ay, good brother,
They call you the Monk-King.

LOUIS. Who calls me? she
That was my wife, now yours? You
have her Duchy,
The point you aim'd at, and pray God
she prove

True wife to you. You have had the
better of us

In secular matters.

HENRY. Come, confess, good brother,
You did your best or worst to keep her
Duchy.

Only the golden Leopard printed in it
Such hold-fast claws that you perforce
again

Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we
convene

This conference but to babble of our
wives?

They are plagues enough in-door.

LOUIS. We fought in the East,
And felt the sun of Antioch scald our
mail,

And push'd our lances into Saracen
hearts.

We never hounded on the State at
home

To spoil the Church.

HENRY. How should you see this
rightly?

LOUIS. Well, well, no more! I am
proud of my 'Monk-King,'
Whoever named me; and, brother,
Holy Church

May rock, but will not wreck, nor our
Archbishop

Stagger on the slope decks for any rough
sea

Blown by the breath of kings. We do
forgive you

For aught you wrought against us.

[HENRY holds up his hand]

Nay, I pray you,
Do not defend yourself. You will do
much

To rake out all old dying heats, if you
At my requesting, will but look into
The wrongs you did him, and restore his
kin,

Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,
Be, both, the friends you were.

HENRY. The friends we were!
Co-mates we were, and had our sport
together,
Co-kings we were, and made the laws
together.

The world had never seen the like before.

You are too cold to know the fast
it.

Well, well, we will be gentle with
gracious —

Most gracious.

[Enter BECKET, after him, JOHN
FORD, ROGER OF YORK, G
FOLIOT, DE BROU, FITZUR

Only that the rift h
May close between us, here I am

king,
The word should come from him

BECKET [kneeling]. Then, m
liege,

I here deliver all this controversy
Into your royal hands.

HENRY. Ah, Thomas, T
Thou art thyself again, Thomas

BECKET [rising]. Saving
honour!

HENRY. Out upon thee, ma
Saving the Devil's honour, his y
no.

Knights, bishops, earls, this l
spawn — by Mahound,

I had sooner have been born a M
man —

Less clashing with their priests
I am half-way down the slope —

man stay me?
I dash myself to pieces — I sta

self —
Puff — it is gone. You, Master l

you
That owe to me your power over

Nay, nay —
Brother of France, you have

cherish'd him
Who thief-like fled from his own

by night,
No man pursuing. I would ha

him back.
Take heed he do not turn and re

too:
For whatsoever may displease

that
Is clean against God's honour —

a trick
Whereby to challenge, face me ou

My regal rights. Yet, yet — tha
may dream

I go against God's honour —
himself

In any reason, choose
A hundred of the wisest head

England,
A hundred, too, from Normand

Anjou:
Let these decide on what was

mary

en days, and all the Church of
ance
on their decision, I am content.
what the mightiest and the
liest
his predecessors may have done
to the least and meanest of my
rn,
m do the same to me — I am
content.

ts. Ay, ay! the King humbles
himself enough.

KET. [*Aside*] Words! he will
iggle out of them like an eel
the time serves. [*Aloud*] My
ges and my lords,
anks of Holy Church are due to
ose

went before us for their work,
ich we
ing reap an easier harvest.
et —

ts. My lord, will you be greater
an the Saints,
than St. Peter? whom — what
it you doubt?
your peace at hand.

KET. I say that those
ent before us did not wholly clear
eadly growths of earth, which
ll's own heat
lt on that they rose and darken'd
eaven.

ey did much. Would God they
d torn up all
e hard root, which shoots again;
r trial

een less; but, seeing they were
en

ive or excessive, must we follow
t they overdid or underdid?

they were defective as St. Peter
ng Christ, who yet defied the
rant,

ld by his defiance, not his defect.
l son Louis, do not counsel me,
e suppress God's honour for the
ke

y king that breathes. No, God
rbid!

ry. No! God forbid! and turn
e Mussulman!

ed but one, and Mahound is his
opphet.

r your Christian, look you, you
all have

other God but me — me, Thomas,
n

lbert Becket, London merchant.
ut!

no more.

LOUIS. Our brother's anger puts
him,

Poor man, beside himself — not wise.
My lord,

We have claspt your cause, believing
that our brother

Had wrong'd you; but this day he
proffer'd peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant
the Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my
good lord,

We that are kings are something in this
world,

And so we pray you, draw yourself from
under

The wings of France. We shelter you
no more. [*Exit*]

JOHN OF OXFORD. I am glad that
France hath scouted him at last:

I told the Pope what manner of man he
was. [*Exit*]

ROGER OF YORK. Yea, since he
flouts the will of either realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead
dog! [*Exit*]

FOLIOT. Yea, let a stranger spoil his
heritage,

And let another take his bishoprick!
[*Exit*]

DE BROC. Our castle, my lord, be-
longs to Canterbury.

I pray you come and take it. [*Exit*]
FITZURSE. When you will. [*Exit*]

BECKET. Cursed be John of Oxford,
Roger of York,

And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De
Brocs

That hold our Saltwood Castle from our
see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of
them

That sow this hate between my lord
and me!

VOICES FROM THE CROWD. Blessed
be the Lord Archbishop, who hath with-
stood two Kings to their faces for the
honour of God.

BECKET. Out of the mouths of babes
and sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but hold
by crowns,

The crowd that hungers for a crown in
Heaven

Is my true king.

HERBERT. Thy true King bade thee
be

A fisher of men; thou hast them in thy
net.

BECKET. I am too like the King
here; both of us

Too headlong for our office. Better
have been
A fisherman at Bosham, my good Her-
bert,
Thy birthplace — the sea-creek — the
petty rill
That falls into it — the green field —
the gray church —
The simple lobster-basket, and the
mesh —
The more or less of daily labour done —
The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest
Piping for bread — the daily want sup-
plied —
The daily pleasure to supply it.

HERBERT. Ah, Thomas,

You had not borne it, no, not for a day.

BECKET. Well, maybe, no.

HERBERT. But bear with Walter
Map,

For here he comes to comment on the
time.

[Enter WALTER MAP]

WALTER MAP. Pity, my lord, that
you have quenched the warmth of
France toward you, tho' His Holiness,
after much smouldering and smoking,
be kindled again upon your quarter.

BECKET. Ay, if he do not end in
smoke again.

WALTER MAP. My lord, the fire,
when first kindled, said to the smoke,
'Go up, my son, straight to Heaven.'
And the smoke said, 'I go;' but anon
the North-east took and turned him
South-west, then the South-west turned
him North-east, and so of the other
winds; but it was in him to go up
straight if the time had been quieter.
Your lordship affects the unwavering
perpendicular; but His Holiness, pushed
one way by the Empire and another by
England, if he move at all, Heaven stay
him, is fain to diagonalise.

HERBERT. Diagonalise! thou art a
word-monger.

Our Thomas never will diagonalise.
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.
Diagonalise!

WALTER MAP. Is the world any the
worse for my verses if the Latin rhymes
be rolled out from a full mouth? or any
harm done to the people if my jest be
in defence of the Truth?

BECKET. Ay, if the jest be so done
that the people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,
Till Truth herself be shamed of her
defender.

Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map.

WALTER MAP. Is that my ca-
if the city be sick, and I cannot
kennel sweet, your lordship wou-
pend me from verse-writing, as y-
pended yourself after sub-writing
customs.

BECKET. I pray God pardon
infirmity.

WALTER MAP. Nay, my lord,
heart; for tho' you suspended y-
the Pope let you down again; and
you suspend Foliot or another, th-
will not leave them in suspense,
Pope himself is always in suspen-
Mahound's coffin hung between
and earth — always in suspense, l-
scales, till the weight of Germany
gold of England brings one of
down to the dust — always in su-
like the tail of the horologe —
fro — tick-tack — we make the ti-
keep the time, ay, and we ser-
time; for I have heard say that
boxed the Pope's ears with a pur-
might stagger him, but he would
the purse. No saying of r-
Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the
hath bought half the College of R-
He warmed to you to-day, and
have chilled him again. Yet yo-
love God. Agree with him c-
again, even for the sake of the C-
My one grain of good counsel
you will not swallow. I hate
between old friendships as I ha-
dirty gap in the face of a Cis-
monk, that will swallow any
Farewell.

BECKET. Map scoffs at Rome,
but hold with Map.

Save for myself no Rome were
England,
All had been his. Why shoul-
Rome, this Rome,
Still choose Barabbas rather th-
Christ,
Absolve the left-hand thief and
the right?

Take fees of tyranny, wink at
lege,

Which even Peter had not dared
denn

The blameless exile? —

HERBERT. Thee, thou holy Th-
I would that thou hadst been the
Father.

BECKET. I would have don-
most to keep Rome holy,
I would have made Rome kno-
still is Rome —

Who stands aghast at her eternal

shakes at mortal kings — her
cillation,
craft — O God, how many an
ocent
ft his bones upon the way to
me
n self
ng had had no power except for
me.
the King who is guilty of mine
le,
me, Rome, Rome!
BERT. My lord, I see this Louis
ng, ah! to drive thee from his
lm.
ET. He said as much before.
ou art no prophet,
a prophet's son.
BERT. Whatever he say,
ot thou God's honour for a king.
ng looks troubled.

[*Re-enter KING LOUIS*]

s. My dear lord Archbishop,
a but now that those poor
tevins,
thy cause were stirr'd against
ng Henry,
en, despite his kingly promise
en
own self of pardon, evilly used
t to pain. I have lost all trust in
a.
church alone hath eyes — and
w I see
was blind — suffer the phrase —
rendering
onour to the pleasure of a man.
me and absolve me, holy father.

[*Kneels*]
ET. Son, I absolve thee in the
me of God.

s [*rising*]. Return to Sens, where
will care for you.
ne and wealth of all our France
yours;

our realm, and be at peace with
[*Exeunt*]

ES FROM THE CROWD. Long live
od King Louis! God bless the
rchbishop!

er HENRY and JOHN OF OXFORD]

RY [*looking after KING LOUIS and*
CKET]. Ay, there they go —
th backs are turn'd to me —
hen I strike into my former path
gland, crown young Henry there,
d make

Our waning Eleanor all but love me!
John,
Thou hast served me heretofore with
Rome — and well.

They call thee John the Swearer.

JOHN OF OXFORD. For this reason,
That, being ever duteous to the King,
I evermore have sworn upon his side,
And ever mean to do it.

HENRY [*claps him on the shoulder*].
Honest John!

To Rome again! the storm begins again.
Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with
our coins,

Threaten our junction with the Emperor
— flatter

And fright the Pope — bribe all the
Cardinals — leave

Lateran and Vatican in one dust of
gold —

Swear and unswear, state and misstate
thy best!

I go to have young Henry crown'd by
York.

ACT III

SCENE FIRST. — *The Bower.*

[HENRY and ROSAMUND]

HENRY. All that you say is just. I
cannot answer it.

Till better times, when I shall put
away —

ROSAMUND. What will you put
away?

HENRY. That which you ask me
Till better times. Let it content you
now

There is no woman that I love so well.

ROSAMUND. No woman but should
be content with that —

HENRY. And one fair child to fondle!

ROSAMUND. O yes, the child
We waited for so long — heaven's gift at
last —

And how you doted on him then! To-
day

I almost fear'd your kiss was colder —
yes —

But then the child is such a child.
What chance

That he should ever spread into the man
Here in our silence? I have done my
best.

I am not learn'd.

HENRY. I am the King, his father,
And I will look to it. Is our secret ours?
Have you had any alarm? no stranger?

ROSAMUND. No.
The warder of the bower hath given
himself
Of late to wine. I sometimes think he
sleeps
When he should watch; and yet what
fear? the people
Believe the wood enchanted. No one
comes,
Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of
wine
Springs from the loneliness of my poor
bower,
Which weighs even on me.

HENRY. Yet these tree-towers,
Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles,—
the voice
Of the perpetual brook, these golden
slopes
Of Solomon-shaming flowers — that was
your saying,
All pleased you so at first.

ROSAMUND. Not now so much.
My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful.
But you were oftener there. I have
none but you.
The brook's voice is not yours, and no
flower, not
The sun himself, should he be changed
to one,
Could shine away the darkness of that
gap
Left by the lack of love.

HENRY. The lack of love!
ROSAMUND. Of one we love. Nay, I
would not be bold,
Yet hoped ere this you might —

[Looks earnestly at him]

HENRY. Anything further?
ROSAMUND. Only my best bower-
maiden died of late,
And that old priest whom John of Salis-
bury trusted
Hath sent another.

HENRY. Secret?
ROSAMUND. I but ask'd her
One question, and she primm'd her
mouth and put
Her hands together — thus — and said,
God help her,
That she was sworn to silence.

HENRY. What did you ask her?
ROSAMUND. Some daily something-
nothing.
HENRY. Secret, then?
ROSAMUND. I do not love her. Must
you go, my liege,
So suddenly?

HENRY. I came to England sud-
denly,
And on a great occasion sure to wake

As great a wrath in Becket —
ROSAMUND. Always
He always comes between us.
HENRY. — And to
I needs must leave as suddenly.
raining,
Put on your hood and see me
bounds.

MARGERY *[singing behind scene]*

Babble in bower
Under the rose!
Bee mustn't buzz,
Whoop — but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,
Nobody near!
Grasshopper, grasshopper,
Whoop — you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,
Tit on the tree!
Bird mustn't tell,
Whoop — he can see.

[Enter MARGERY]

I ha' been but a week here and
seen what I ha' seen, for to be s
no more than a week since o
Father Philip that has confess
mother for twenty years, and s
hard put to it, and to speak tru
at the end of our last crust, an
mouldy, and she cried out on him
me forth in the world and to mak
woman of the world, and to win n
bread, whereupon he asked our
if I could keep a quiet tongue i' m
and not speak till I was spoke to
answered for myself that I never
more than was needed, and he t
he would advance me to the ser
great lady, and took me ever so fa
and gave me a great pat o' the ch
a pretty wench, and said it was a
blindfold such eyes as mine, and
be sure they be, but he blinded
all that, and so brought me no-h
I may say, and the more shame
after his promise, into a garden a
into the world, and bade me wha
saw not to speak one word, an' it
well for me in the end, for the
great ones who would look after n
to be sure I ha' seen great ones to-
and then not to speak one wo
that's the rule o' the garden, tho
sure if I had been Eve i' the ga
shouldn't ha' minded the app
what's an apple, you know, sav
child, and I'm no child, but a

n o' the world than my lady here,
 ha' seen what I ha' seen — tho'
 sure if I hadn't minded it we
 all on us ha' had to go, bless the
 wi' bare backs, but the backs 'ud
 outnanced one another, and be-
 'ud ha' been always summer, and
 w I am as well-shaped as my lady
 and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and
 the good of my talking to myself,
 re comes my lady [*enter ROSA-*
 and, my lady, tho' I shouldn't
 one word, I wish you joy o' the
 brother.

AMUND. What is it you mean?

MARGERY. I mean your goodman,
 husband, my lady, for I saw your
 lip a-parting wi' him even now i'
 apiece, when I was a-getting o'
 ills for your ladyship's nose to
 on — and I ha' seen the King once
 ord, and he's as like the King as
 nail to fingernail, and I thought at
 was the King, only you know the
 married, for King Louis —

AMUND. Married!

MARGERY. Years and years, my
 or her husband, King Louis —

AMUND. Hush!

MARGERY. — And I thought if it
 the King's brother he had a better
 than the King, for the people do
 at his is bad beyond all reckoning,

AMUND. The people lie.

MARGERY. Very like, my lady, but
 on 'em know an honest woman and
 when they see her, and besides
 say, she makes songs, and that's
 t her, for I never knew an honest
 n that could make songs, tho' to be
 ur mother 'ill sing me old songs by
 our, but then, God help her, she
 em from her mother, and her
 r from her mother back and back
 er so long, but none of 'em ever
 songs, and they were all honest.

AMUND. Go, you shall tell me of
 me other time.

MARGERY. There's none so much to
 a her, my lady, only she kept the
 th commandment better than
 I know on, or I couldn't look your
 up i' the face, and she brew'd the
 le in all Glo'ster, that is to say in
 me when she had the 'Crown.'

AMUND. The crown! who?

MARGERY. Mother.

AMUND. I mean her whom you
 fancy — my husband's brother's

MARGERY. Oh, Queen Eleanor. Yes,
 my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to
 speak a word, I can tell you all about
 her, if —

ROSAMUND. No word now. I am
 faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay —
 go. What! will you anger me?

[*Exit MARGERY*]

He charged me not to question any of
 those

About me. Have I? no! she ques-
 tion'd me.

Did she not slander *him*? Should she
 stay here?

May she not tempt me, being at my side,
 To question *her*? Nay, can I send her
 hence

Without his kingly leave? I am in the
 dark.

I have lived, poor bird, from cage to
 cage, and known

Nothing but him — happy to know no
 more,

So that he loved me — and he loves me
 — yes,

And bound me by his love to secrecy
 Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I
 Not heard ill things of her in France?

Oh, she's

The Queen of France. I see it — some
 confusion,

Some strange mistake. I did not hear
 aright,

Myself confused with parting from the
 King.

MARGERY [*behind scene*]. Bee mustn't
 buzz,

Whoop — but he knows.

ROSAMUND. Yet her — what her? he
 hinted of some her —

When he was here before —

Something that would displease me.
 Hath he stray'd

From love's clear path into the common
 bush,

And, being scratch'd, returns to his true
 rose,

Who hath not thorn enough to prick
 him for it,

Ev'n with a word?

MARGERY [*behind scene*]. Bird mustn't
 tell,

Whoop — he can see.

ROSAMUND. I would not hear him.
 Nay — there's more — he frown'd

'No mate for her, if it should come to
 that' —

To that — to what?

MARGERY [*behind scene*]. Whoop —
 but he knows,

Whoop — but he knows.

ROSAMUND. O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me —
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

[Enter GEOFFREY]

Geoffrey!

GEOFFREY. What are you crying for,
when the sun shines?

ROSAMUND. Hath not thy father left
us to ourselves?

GEOFFREY. Ay, but he's taken the
rain with him. I hear Margery: I'll
go play with her. [Exit GEOFFREY]

ROSAMUND.

Rainbow, stay,
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!
But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom —
O rainbow, stay.

SCENE SECOND. — *Outside the Woods near
ROSAMUND'S Bower.*

[ELEANOR. FITZURSE]

ELEANOR. Up from the salt lips of
the land we two
Have track'd the King to this dark
inland wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd.
Here

His turtle builds; his exit is our adit:
Watch! he will out again, and presently,
Seeing he must to Westminster and
crown

Young Henry there to-morrow.

FITZURSE. We have watch'd
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out again,
And on the other side.

[A great horn winded]

Hark! Madam!

ELEANOR. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the
black wood!

[A countryman flying]

Whither away, man? what are you
flying from?

COUNTRYMAN. The witch! the witch!
she sits naked by a great heap of gold in
the middle of the wood, and when the
horn sounds she comes out as a wolf.
Get you hence! a man passed in there
to-day: I holla'd to him, but he didn't
hear me: he'll never out again, the
witch has got him. I daren't stay — I
daren't stay!

ELEANOR. Kind of the witch t
thee warning tho'. [Margery]
Is not this wood-witch of the r
fear

Our woodland Circe that hath w
the King?

[Horn sounded. Another]

FITZURSE. Again! stay, fo
tell me why thou fliest.

COUNTRYMAN. Fly thou too.
King keeps his forest head of game
and when that horn sounds, a se
wolf-dogs are let loose that wil
thee piecemeal. Linger not ti
third horn. Fly!

ELEANOR. This is the likeli
We have hit the place.
Now let the King's fine game lo
itself.

FITZURSE. Again! —
And far on in the dark heart o
wood

I hear the yelping of the hounds o
ELEANOR. I have my dagger h
still their throats.

FITZURSE. Nay, Madam, no
night — the night is falling.
What can be done to-night?

ELEANOR. Well — well —

SCENE THIRD. — *Traitor's Mead
Fréteval. Pavilions and tents
English and French Baronage.*

[BECKET and HERBERT OF BO]

BECKET. See here!

HERBERT. What's h

BECKET. A notice from the
To whom our John of Salisbury
mitted

The secret of the bower, that ou
Queen

Is prowling round the fold. I sho
back

In England ev'n for this.

HERBERT. These are by-
In the great cause.

BECKET. The by-things of the
Are the wrong'd innocences that w
From all the hidden by-ways o
world

In the great day against the wrong
know

Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all,
The Church should suffer wrong!

HERBERT. Do you see, my
There is the King talking with V
Map?

BECKET. He hath the Pope's
letters, and they threaten

mediate thunder-blast of inter-
dict:

He can scarce be touching upon
the cross,

Free would smile that fashion.

HERBERT. Winter sunshine!
Of opening out thy bosom to it,
Thou, myself, and all thy flock
Could catch

An ague-fit of trembling. Look!
As he bares his head, he is coming
To pierce.

With a smile.

KING HENRY and WALTER MAP]

RY. We have had so many hours
Together, Thomas,

My happy hours alone together,
I would speak with you once more
Alone.

HERBERT. My liege, your will and
Felicity are mine.

[*Re-enters KING and BECKET*]

HERBERT. The same smile still.

WALTER MAP. Do you see that great
Cloud that hath come over the sun
To stave us all into shadow?

HERBERT. And feel it too.

WALTER MAP. And see you yon side-
That is forced from under it, and
The church-tower over there all
Dark as it were?

HERBERT. Ay.

WALTER MAP. It is this black, bell-
ing, anti-marrying, burial-hinder-
dict that hath squeezed out this
Smile upon Canterbury, whereof
Come conflagration. Were I
Not, I wouldn't trust it. Sudden
Is a house on sand; and tho' I
Henry honest enough, yet when
Creeps in at the front, honesty
Out at the back, and the King at
Fairly scared by this cloud

Interdict. I have been more for-
Than the Church in this mat-
ter, even for the sake of the
King: for, truly, as the case stood,
And safer have slain an arch-
Than a she-goat: but our re-
And upholder of customs hath
The crowning of young Henry by
And London so violated the im-
Usage of the Church, that,
The gravedigger's child I have
Of, trying to ring the bell, he
Half-hanged himself in the rope
Church, or rather pulled all the
King with the Holy Father astride
Upon his own head.

HERBERT. Were you there?

WALTER MAP. In the church rope?
No. I was at the crowning, for I
Have pleasure in the pleasure of crowds,
And to read the faces of men at a great
Show.

HERBERT. And how did Roger of
York comport himself?

WALTER MAP. As magnificently and
archiepiscopally as our Thomas would
have done: only there was a dare-devil
In his eye — I should say a dare-Becket.
He thought less of two kings than of one
Roger the king of the occasion. Foliot
Is the holier man, perhaps the better.
Once or twice there ran a twitch across
His face as who should say what's to
Follow? but Salisbury was a calf cowed
By Mother Church, and every now and
Then glancing about him like a thief at
Night when he hears a door open in the
House and thinks 'the master.'

HERBERT. And the father-king?

WALTER MAP. The father's eye was
So tender it would have called a goose off
The green, and once he strove to hide
His face, like the Greek king when his
Daughter was sacrificed, but he thought
Better of it: it was but the sacrifice of a
Kingdom to his son, a smaller matter;
But as to the young crowning himself, he
Looked so malapert in the eyes, that had
I fathered him I had given him more of
The rod than the sceptre. Then followed
The thunder of the captains and the
Shouting, and so we came on to the
Banquet, from whence there puffed out
Such an incense of unctuousity into the
Nostrils of our Gods of Church and
State, that Lucullus or Apicius might
Have sniffed it in their Hades of heathen-
ism, so that the smell of their own roast
Had not come across it.

HERBERT. Map, tho' you make your
Butt too big, you overshoot it.

WALTER MAP. — For as to the fish,
They de-miracled the miraculous draught,
And might have sunk a navy.

HERBERT. There again, Goliath and
Goliathising!

WALTER MAP. — And as for the
Flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet,
With all manner of game, and four-footed
Things, and fowls

HERBERT. And all manner of creep-
ing things too?

WALTER MAP. — Well, there were
Abbots — but they did not bring their
Women; and so we were dull enough
At first, but in the end we flourished out
Into a merriment; for the old King
Would act servitor and hand a dish to

his son; whereupon my Lord of York — his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel — 'great honour,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip?

HERBERT. No, what was it?

WALTER MAP. Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered: — 'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness — part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity — part childlike again — when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves — many midriff-shaken oven to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes — but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration — tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again — for the moment.

HERBERT. Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is.

[*Re-enter HENRY and BECKET. (During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS of France and England come in at back of stage.)*]

BECKET. Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,
The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen —
The daughter of Zion lies beside the way —
The priests of Baal tread her underfoot —
The golden ornaments are stolen from her —

HENRY. Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,
And send thee back again to Canterbury?

BECKET. Send back again those exiles of my kin
Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

HENRY. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

BECKET. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales

Of privilege, crowning thy young York,
London and Salisbury — not Canterbury.

HENRY. York crown'd the queror — not Canterbury.

BECKET. There was no Cant in William's time.

HENRY. But Hereford, you crown'd the first Henry.

BECKET. But Anselm crown'd Henry o'er again.

HENRY. And thou shalt crown Henry o'er again.

BECKET. And is it then with goodwill that I

Proceed against thine evil council
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those

Who made the second mitre pliant first,

And acted me?

HENRY. Well, well, then — have your way!

It may be they were evil council.

What more, my lord Archbishop?

What more, Thomas?

I make thee full amends. Say, say,

But blaze not out before the French here.

BECKET. More? Nothing, save my promise be thy deed.

HENRY [*holding out his hand*].
me thy hand. My Lords of France and England,

My friend of Canterbury and myself
Are now once more at perfect amity.

Unkingly should I be, and mock thee knightly,

Not striving still, however much I wish
To rival him in Christian charity.

HERBERT. All praise to Heaven for sweet St. Magdalen!

HENRY. And so farewell until we meet in England.

BECKET. I fear, my liege, we shall not meet in England.

HENRY. How, do you make me a traitor?

BECKET. No, indeed! That be far from thee.

HENRY. Come, stay with us. Before you part for England.

BECKET. I am not going. For that one hour to stay with King Louis,

Who helpt me when none else.

HERBERT. He said that was not one hour's worth in life to save

Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

HERY. He said so? Louis, did he? Look you, Herbert,

I was in mine anger with King Louis,

ere I would not give the kiss of peace,

on a French ground, nor any ground but English,

in this cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas,

did there were that perfect trust between us,

health of heart, once ours, ere we parted,

come between us! Even now — who knows? —

it deliver all things to thy hand — but I say no more . . . farewell, my lord.

HERY. Farewell, my liege!

[Exit HENRY, then the BARONS and BISHOPS]

WALTER MAP. There again! when I fruit of the royal promise might dropt into thy mouth hadst thou opened it to thank him.

HERY. He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

WALTER MAP. And is the King's *if* with a stile for your lordship to over- and come at all things in the next

HERY. Ay, if this *if* be like the devil's *'if*

wilt fall down and worship me.'

HERY. Oh, Thomas,

I fall down and worship thee, my Thomas,

you hast trodden this wine-press one.

HERY. Nay, of the people there be many with me.

WALTER MAP. I am not altogether you, my lord, tho' I am none of that would raise a storm between

est ye should draw together like ships in a calm. You wrong the

he meant what he said to-day.

shall vouch for his to-morrows? word further. Doth not the fever-

anything make the fulness of it in action? Is not virtue prized mainly

rarity, and great baseness loathed exception? for were all, my lord,

le as yourself, who would look up? and were all as base as — who

say — Fitzurse and his following would look down upon them?

ed, you have put so many of the

King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

BECKET. At their peril, at their peril —

WALTER MAP. — For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. [Exit]

HERBERT. Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King

Speak of the customs?

BECKET. No! — To die for it — I live to die for it, I die to live for it.

The State will die, the Church can never die.

The King's not like to die for that which dies;

But I must die for that which never dies.

It will be so — my visions in the Lord: It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England

Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep

May feed in peace. False figure, Map! would say.

Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice

Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,

That perfect trust may come again between us,

And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice

To find my stray sheep back within the fold.

The crowd are scattering, let us move away!

And thence to England. [Exeunt]

ACT IV

SCENE FIRST. — *The outskirts of the Bower.*

GEOFFREY [coming out of the wood]. Light again! light again! Margery?

no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

ELEANOR [*entering*]. Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

GEOFFREY. On my legs.

ELEANOR. And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

GEOFFREY. No; I only love mother.

ELEANOR. Ay; and who is thy mother?

GEOFFREY. They call her — But she lives secret, you see.

ELEANOR. Why?

GEOFFREY. Don't know why.

ELEANOR. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

GEOFFREY. Can't tell.

ELEANOR. What does she call him?

GEOFFREY. My liege.

ELEANOR. Pretty one, how camest thou?

GEOFFREY. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

ELEANOR. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

GEOFFREY. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

ELEANOR. She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

GEOFFREY. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

ELEANOR. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art — [*aside*] little bastard. Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

GEOFFREY. No — no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

ELEANOR. I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

GEOFFREY. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

ELEANOR. Where's the warder?

GEOFFREY. Very bad. Somebody struck him.

ELEANOR. Ay? who was that?

GEOFFREY. Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come

along, then; we shall see the sil
and there, and I want my supper
[*E*]

SCENE SECOND. — ROSAMUND'S

ROSAMUND. The boy so late;

God, he be not lost.

I sent this Margery, and she com
back;

I sent another, and she comes not

I go myself — so many alleys, cro

Paths, avenues — nay, if I los

now

The folds have fallen from the m

And left all naked, I were lost in

[*Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR*]

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put

[*Seeing ELEANOR*]

Ha

How came you hither?

ELEANOR. Your own child b
me hither!

GEOFFREY. You said you co
trust Margery, and I watched h
followed her into the woods, and
her and went on and on till I fou
light and the lady, and she says s
make you sleep o' nights.

ROSAMUND. How dared you?

you not this bower is secret,

Of and belonging to the King of
land,

More sacred than his forests f
chase?

Nay, nay, Heaven help you; g
hence in haste

Lest worse befall you.

ELEANOR. Child, I am mine o
Of and belonging to the King.

King

Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and b
ings,

Almost as many as your true. M
man —

Belongings, paramours, whom it p
him

To call his wives; but so it ch
child,

That I am his main paramou
sultana.

But since the fondest pair of dov
jar,

Ev'n in a cage of gold, we had we
late,

And thereupon he call'd my ch
bastards.

u believe that you are married to
m?
AMUND. I should believe it.
ANOR. You must not believe it,
so I have a wholesome medicine
ro
hat hollef asleep. Your answer,
muty!
u believe that you are married to
m?
AMUND. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw
ll you lost in the fork of the great
over the brook. Go. See that
e not fall in. Go.
GEOFFREY. And leave you alone
the good fairy. She calls you
e, but I don't like her looks.
you bid me go, and I'll have my
nyhow. Shall I find you asleep
I come back?
AMUND. Go. [Exit GEOFFREY]
ANOR. He is easily found again.
o you believe it?
e you then to take my sleeping-
night;
you should not care to take it —
e! [Draws a dagger]
have I scared the red rose from
our face
our heart? But this will find it
re,
ig it from the root for ever.
AMUND. Help! help!
ANOR. They say that walls have
e; but these, it seems,
none! and I have none — to pity
too.
AMUND. I do beseech you — my
ild is so young,
ward too; I cannot leave him
st.
not so happy I could not die
yself.
he child is so young. You have
ildren — his;
ine is the King's child; so, if you
ve him
if you love him, there is great
rong done
ow; but if you do not — there
e those
ay you do not love him — let me
my young boy, and I will hide
y face,
u and gipsyfy it; none shall
ow me;
ing shall never hear of me again,
ill beg my bread along the world
ny young boy, and God will be
r guide.

I never meant you harm in any way.
See, I can say no more.
ELEANOR. Will you not say you are
not married to him?
ROSAMUND. Ay, Madam, I can say
it, if you will.
ELEANOR. Then is thy pretty boy a
bastard?
ROSAMUND. No.
ELEANOR. And thou thyself a proven
wanton?
ROSAMUND. No.
I am none such. I never loved but one.
I have heard of such that range from
love to love,
Like the wild beast — if you can call it
love.
I have heard of such — yea, even
among those
Who sit on thrones — I never saw any
such,
Never knew any such, and howsoever
You do misname me, match'd with any
such,
I am snow to mud.
ELEANOR. The more the pity then
That thy true home — the heavens —
cry out for thee
Who art too pure for earth.
[Enter FITZURSE]
FITZURSE. Give her to me.
ELEANOR. The Judas-lover of our
passion-play
Hath track'd us hither.
FITZURSE. Well, why not? I fol-
low'd
You and the child: he babbled all the
way.
Give her to me to make my honey-
moon.
ELEANOR. Ay, as the bears love
honey. Could you keep her
Indungeon'd from one whisper of the
wind,
Dark even from a side glance of the
moon,
And oublietted in the centre — No!
I follow out my hate and thy revenge.
FITZURSE. You bade me take re-
venge another way —
To bring her to the dust. . . . Come
with me, love,
And I will love thee. . . . Madam,
let her live.
I have a far-off burrow where the King
Would miss her and for ever.
ELEANOR. How sayest thou,
sweetheart?
Wilt thou go with him? he will marry
thee.

ROSAMUND. Give me the poison; set me free of him!

[ELEANOR offers the vial]
No, no! I will not have it.

ELEANOR. Then this other,
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught
May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make
Thy body loathsome even to thy child;
While this but leaves thee with a broken heart;
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which
If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,
It must be broken for him.

ROSAMUND. O I see now
Your purpose is to fright me — a troubadour
You play with words. You had never used so many,
Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child . . .
No . . . mercy! No! [Kneels]

ELEANOR. Play! . . . that bosom never
Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion
As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot
Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it: arise,
And dash thyself against me that I may slay thee!
The worm! shall I let her go? But ha! what's here?

By very God, the cross I gave the King!
His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her own.
By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same! I warrant
Thou hast sworn on this my cross a hundred times
Never to leave him — and that merits death,
False oath on holy cross — for thou must leave him
To-day, but not quite yet. My good Fitzurse,
The running down the chase is kindlier sport
Ev'n than the death. Who knows but that thy lover
May plead so pitifully, that I may spare thee?
Come hither, man; stand there. [To ROSAMUND] Take thy one chance;

Catch at the last straw. Kneel lord Fitzurse;
Crouch even because thou hatest fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.

ROSAMUND [rising]. I am a Clifford
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet
I am to die then, tho' there stand thee
One who might grapple with thy child if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman or I
Would bow to such a baseness as make me
Most worthy of it; both of us women
And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the stars:

'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of the land!
Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor
Whose doings are a horror to the stars:
A hissing in the west!' Have you heard
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle,
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own brother,
band's father —
Nay, ev'n the accursed heathen
deed —
Strike!

I challenge thee to meet me before
Answer me there.

ELEANOR [raising the dagger]. Thy
thy bosom, fool,
And after in thy bastard's!

[Enter BECKET from behind. Catches hold of her arm]

BECKET. Murder!
[The dagger falls; they stare at one another. After a pause]

ELEANOR. My lord, we know
proud of your fine hand,
But having now admired it long enough
We find that it is mightier than
seems —

At least mine own is frailer: you are
laming it.

BECKET. And lamed and maimed
dislocation, better
Than raised to take a life which I
bade me
Guard from the stroke that dooms
after death
To wail in deathless flame.

ELEANOR. Nor you,
Have now to learn, my lord, that
good Henry

many a thing in sudden heats,
 rich he
 ys by next sunrising — often
 ady
 r himself for having said as much.
 d, Fitzurse —
 KET. He too! what dost thou
 ro?
 the bear slouch into the lion's
 n?
 downward plunge of his paw would
 nd away
 ht and manhood, life itself, from
 oo.
 t I blast thee with anathema,
 ake thee a world's horror.
 URSE. My lord, I shall
 ber this.
 KET. I do remember thee;
 remember thee to the lion, go.
 [Exit FITZURSE]
 up your dagger; put it in the
 eath.
 ANOR. Might not your courtesy
 oop to hand it me?
 owns must bow when mitres sit
 high.
 - well — too costly to be left or
 st. [Picks up the dagger]
 t from an Arab soldan, who,
 was there in Antioch, marvell'd
 familiar beauties of the west;
 onder'd more at my much con-
 ancy
 e monk-king, Louis, our former
 rthon,
 whom, as being too kin, you know,
 y lord,
 grace and Holy Church deliver'd
 t.
 k, time given, I could have talk'd
 m out of
 n wives into one. Look at the
 ll.
 excellent workmanship. In our
 oor west
 not do it so well.
 KET. We can do worse.
 n, I saw your dagger at her
 roat;
 l your savage cry.
 ANOR. Well acted, was it?
 dy meant to seem a tragedy —
 , a farce. My honest lord, you
 known
 all the courts of Christendom as
 ars a cause with over-violence.
 ive wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak
 of myself.

We thought to scare this minion of the
 King
 Back from her churchless commerce
 with the King
 To the fond arms of her first love,
 Fitzurse,
 Who swore to marry her. You have
 spoilt the farce.
 My savage cry? Why, she — she —
 when I strove
 To work against her license for her
 good,
 Bark'd out at me such monstrous
 charges, that
 The King himself, for love of his own
 sons,
 If hearing, would have spurn'd her;
 whereupon
 I menaced her with this, as when we
 threaten
 A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not,
 That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you
 hear me?
 Believe or no, I care not. You have
 lost
 The ear of the King. I have it. . . ,
 My lord Paramount,
 Our great High-priest, will not your
 Holiness
 Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your
 Queen?
 BECKET. Rosamund hath not an-
 swer'd you one word;
 Madam, I will not answer you one word.
 Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee.
 Leave it, daughter;
 Come thou with me to Godstow nun-
 nery,
 And live what may be left thee of a life
 Saved as by miracle alone with Him
 Who gave it.
 [Re-enter GEOFFREY]
 GEOFFREY. Mother, you told me a
 great fib: it wasn't in the willow.
 BECKET. Follow us, my son, and we
 will find it for thee —
 Or something manlier.
 [Exeunt BECKET, ROSAMUND, and
 GEOFFREY]
 ELEANOR. The world hath trick'd
 her — that's the King; if so,
 There was the farce, the feint — not
 mine. And yet
 I am all but sure my dagger was a feint
 Till the worm turn'd — not life shot up
 in blood,
 But death drawn in; — [looking at the
 vial] this was no feint then? no.
 But can I swear to that, had she but
 given

Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks
 Had she but bow'd herself to meet the wave
 Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,
 I should have let her be, scorn'd her too much
 To harm her. Henry — Becket tells him this —
 To take my life might lose him Aquitaine.
 Too politic for that. Imprison me?
 No, for it came to nothing — only a feint.
 Did she not tell me I was playing on her?
 I'll swear to mine own self it was a feint.
 Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or was,
 A sovereign power? The King plucks out their eyes
 Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,
 Tear out her heart — kill, kill with knife or venom
 One of his slanderous harlots? 'None of such?'
 I love her none the more. Tut, the chance gone,
 She lives — but not for him; one point is gain'd.
 O I, that thro' the Pope divorced King Louis,
 Scorning his monkery, — I that wedded Henry,
 Honouring his manhood, — will he not mock at me
 The jealous fool balk'd of her will — with *him*?
 But he and he must never meet again.
 Roginald Fitzurse!

[*Re-enter FITZURSE*]

FITZURSE. Here, Madam, at your pleasure.
 ELEANOR. My pleasure is to have a man about me.
 Why did you slink away so like a cur?
 FITZURSE. Madam, I am as much man as the King.
 Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King.
 ELEANOR. He grovels to the Church when he's black-blooded,
 But kinglike fought the proud archbishop, — kinglike
 Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires,

The Normans, striving still to bind
 The spiritual giant with our island
 And customs, made me for the proud
 Ev'n of that stale Church-bond link'd me with him
 To bear him kingly sons. I am sure
 But that I love him still. The much man!
 No more of that; we will to France
 Beforehand with the King, and from out
 This Godstow-Becket intermeddle such
 A strong hate-philtre as may madden him —
 Against his priest beyond all hell

ACT V

SCENE FIRST. — *Castle in Northamptonshire.*
 KING'S chamber.

[HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, ELEANOR, and
 JOCELYN OF SALISBURY]

ROGER OF YORK. Nay, nay, my liege,
 He rides abroad with armed followers
 Hath broken all his promises to the Church
 Cursed and anathematized us right and left,
 Stir'd up a party there against his son —
 HENRY. Roger of York, you have hated him,
 Even when you both were boys and bald's.
 ROGER OF YORK. I always hated his
 boundless arrogance.
 In mine own cause I strove against him
 there,
 And in thy cause I strive against him
 now.
 HENRY. I cannot think he has
 against my son;
 Knowing right well with what a tenderness
 He loved my son.
 ROGER OF YORK. Before you hated
 him king.
 But Becket ever moves against the Church
 The Church is all — the crime to the king.
 We trust your Royal Grace, lord of the land

any crown in Europe, will not yield

your neck beneath your citizen's heel.

HENRY. Not to a Gregory of my throning! No.

LIOT. My royal liege, in aiming at your love,

may be sometimes I have overshot duties to our Holy Mother Church, all the world allows I fall no inch and this Becket, rather go beyondourgings, macerations, mortifyings, disciplines that clear the spiritual eye,

break the soul from earth. Let all that be.

st not: but you know thro' all this quarrel

have cleaved to the crown, in hope the crown

d cleave to me that but obey'd the crown,

ning your son; for which our loyal service,

since we likewise swore to obey the customs,

and myself, and our good Salisbury here,

ush'd from out communion of the Church.

CELYN OF SALISBURY. Becket hath rodden on us like worms, my liege; den one half dead; one half, but half-alive,

to the King.

HENRY. [*Aside*] Take care o' thyself, O King.

CELYN OF SALISBURY. Being so crush'd and so humiliated

scarcely dare to bless the food we eat use of Becket.

HENRY. What would ye have me do?

GER OF YORK. Summon your barons; take their counsel: yet

ow—could swear—as long as Becket breathes,

Grace will never have one quiet hour.

HENRY. What? . . . Ay . . . but pray you do not work upon me.

your drift . . . it may be so . . . and yet

know me easily anger'd. Will you hence?

shall absolve you . . . you shall have redress.

ea dizzying headache. Let me rest. all you by and by.

[*Exit* ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT, and JOCELYN OF SALISBURY]

Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.

If God would take him in some sudden way—

Would he were dead. [*Lies down*]

PAGE [*entering*]. My liege, the Queen of England.

HENRY. God's eyes! [*Starting up*]

[*Enter ELEANOR*]

ELEANOR. Of England? Say of Aquitaine.

I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd

I was the bride of England, and a queen.

HENRY. And,—while you dream'd you were the bride of England,—

Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!

ELEANOR. The brideless Becket is thy king and mine:

I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

HENRY. Except I clap thee into prison here,

Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there again.

Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquitaine!

You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no wife;

You are only Aquitaine to me—no wife.

ELEANOR. And why, my lord, should I be wife to one

That only wedded me for Aquitaine?

Yet this no wife—her six and thirty sail

Of Provence blew you to your English throne;

And this no wife has borne you four brave sons,

And one of them at least is like to prove bigger in our small world than thou art.

HENRY. Ay—Richard, if he be mine—I hope him mine.

But thou art like enough to make him thine.

ELEANOR. Becket is like enough to make all his.

HENRY. Methought I had recover'd of the Becket,

That all was planed and bevell'd smooth again,

Save from some hateful cantrip of thine own.

ELEANOR. I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

I dream'd I was the consort of a king,

Not one whose back his priest has broken.

HENRY. What!
Is the end come? You, will you crown
my foe
My victor in mid-battle? I will be
sole master of my house. The end is
mine.

What game, what juggle, what devilry
are you playing?

Why do you thrust this Becket on me
again?

ELEANOR. Why? for I *am* true wife,
and have my fears

lest Becket thrust you even from your
throne.

Do you know this cross, my liege?

HENRY [*turning his head*]. Away!
Not I.

ELEANOR. Not ev'n the central dia-
mond, worth, I think,

Half of the Antioch whence I had it?

HENRY. That?

ELEANOR. I gave it you, and you
your paramour;

She sends it back, as being dead to
earth.

So do I henceforth to you.

HENRY. Dead! you have murder'd
her.

Found out her secret bower and mur-
der'd her!

ELEANOR. Your Becket knew the
secret of your bower.

HENRY [*calling out*]. Ho there! thy
rest of life is hopeless prison.

ELEANOR. And what would my own
Aquitaine say to that?

First, free thy captive from *her* hope-
less prison.

HENRY. O devil, can I free her from
the grave?

ELEANOR. You are too tragic: both
of us are players

In such a comedy as our court of Pro-
vence

Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate Latin
lay

Of Walter Map: the lady holds the
cleric

Lovelier than any soldier, his poor
tongue

A crown of Empire. Will you have it
again?

[*Offering the cross. He dashes it
down*]

St. Cupid, that is too irreverent.

Then mine once more. [*Puts it on*]

Your cleric hath your lady.

Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see
you!

Foam at the mouth because King
Thomas, lord

Not only of your vassals but amou
Thro' chastest honour of the Dece
Hath used the full authority o
Church

To put her into Godstow nunnery!

HENRY. To put her into God
nunnery!

He dared not — liar! yet, yet I re-
ber

I do remember.

He bade me put her into a nunner
into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devil

The Church! the Church!

God's eyes! I would the Church
down in hell!

ELEANOR. Aha!

[*Enter the four KNIGHTS*]

FITZURSE. What made the Kin
out so furiously?

ELEANOR. Our Becket, who wi
absolve the Bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love
Becket.

FITZURSE. I hate him for his
lonce to all.

DE TRACY. And I for all his inse
to thee.

DE BRITO. I hate him for I ha
is my reason,

And yet I hate him for a hypocrite

DE MORVILLE. I do not love
for he did his best

To break the barons, and now b
the King.

ELEANOR. Strike, then, at once
King would have him — See!

[*Re-enter HENRY*]

HENRY. No man to love me, ho
me, obey me!

Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has k
his King!

The dog I cram'd with dainties wo
me!

The fellow that on a lame jade can
court,

A ragged cloak for saddle — he, he
To shake my throne, to push into
chamber

My bed, where ev'n the slave is pri
— he —

I'll have her out again, he shall abs

The bishops — they but did my w
not you —

Sluggards and fools, why do you s
and stare?

You are no King's men — you — y
you are Becket's men.

with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!
 no man free me from this pestilent priest?
 [Exit]
 [The KNIGHTS draw their swords]
 ANOR. Are ye king's men? I am king's woman, I.
 E KNIGHTS. King's men! King's men!

SECOND. — *A Room in Canterbury Monastery*

BECKET and JOHN OF SALISBURY

BECKET. York said so?
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. Yes: a man may take good counsel from his foe.
 BECKET. York will say anything. Is he saying now? gone to the King taken our anathema with him. York! the King de-anathematise this York?
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. Thomas, I would thou hadst return'd to England, some wise prince of this world from his wars, more of olive-branch and amnesty does at home — thou hast raised the world against thee.
 BECKET. Why, John, my kingdom is not of this world.
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. If it were more of this world it might be of the next. A policy of wise pardon here as well as there. To bless thine enemies —
 BECKET. Ay, mine, not Heaven's.
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. And may there not be something in this world's leaven in thee too, when crying Holy Church to thunder out her lights thine own wrong so pitilessly? Ah, Thomas, lightnings that we think are only leaven's sometimes out of earth against the heavens.
 BECKET. A soldier, when he lets his whole self go in the common good, the common wrong,

Strikes truest ev'n for his own self. I crave Thy pardon — I have still thy leave to speak.
 Thou hast waged God's war against the King; and yet We are self-uncertain creatures, and we may, Yea, even when we know not, mix our spites And private hates with our defence of Heaven.

[Enter EDWARD GRIM]

BECKET. Thou art but yesterday from Cambridge, Grim; What say ye there of Becket?
 GRIM. I believe him The bravest in our roll of Primates down From Austin — there are some — for there are men Of canker'd judgment everywhere —
 BECKET. Who hold With York, with York against me.
 GRIM. Well, my lord, A stranger monk desires access to you.
 BECKET. York against Canterbury, York against God!
 I am open to him. [Exit GRIM]

[Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk]

ROSAMUND. Can I speak with you Alone, my father?
 BECKET. Come you to confess?
 ROSAMUND. Not now.
 BECKET. Then speak; this is my other self, Who like my conscience never lets me be.
 ROSAMUND [throwing back the cowl]. I know him; our good John of Salisbury.
 BECKET. Breaking already from thy noviciate To plunge into this bitter world again — These wells of Marah. I am grieved, my daughter. I thought that I had made a peace for thee.
 ROSAMUND. Small peace was mine in my noviciate, father. Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whisper crept That thou wouldst excommunicate the King. I could not eat, sleep, pray: I had with me The monk's disguise thou gavest me for my bower:

I think our Abbess knew it and allow'd it.
 I fled, and found thy name a charm to get me
 Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber once,
 I told him I was bound to see the Archbishop;
 'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I pass'd
 From house to house. In one a son stone-blind
 Sat by his mother's hearth: he had gone too far
 Into the King's own woods; and the poor mother,
 Soon as she learnt I was a friend of thine,
 Cried out against the cruelty of the King.
 I said it was the King's courts, not the King;
 But she would not believe me, and she wish'd
 The Church were king: she had seen the Archbishop once,
 So mild, so kind. The people love thee, father.
 BECKET. Alas! when I was Chancellor to the King,
 I fear I was as cruel as the King.
 ROSAMUND. Cruel? Oh, no — it is in the law, not he;
 The customs of the realm.
 BECKET. The customs! customs!
 ROSAMUND. My lord, you have not excommunicated him?
 Oh, if you have, absolve him!
 BECKET. Daughter, daughter, Deal not with things you know not.
 ROSAMUND. I know him.
 Then you have done it, and I call you cruel.
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. No, daughter, you mistake our good Archbishop; For once in France the King had been so harsh,
 He thought to excommunicate him — Thomas,
 You could not — old affection master'd you,
 You father'd into tears.
 ROSAMUND. God bless him for it.
 BECKET. Nay, make me not a woman, John of Salisbury,
 Nor make me traitor to my holy office. Did not a man's voice ring along the aisle,
 'The King is sick and almost unto death?'
 How could I excommunicate him then?

ROSAMUND. And wilt thou communicate him now?
 BECKET. Daughter, my time I shall not do it.
 And were it longer — well — I not do it.
 ROSAMUND. Thanks in this life in the life to come.
 BECKET. Get thee back nunnery with all haste;
 Let this be thy last trespass. I question
 How faros thy pretty boy, the Geoffrey?
 No fever, cough, croup, sickness.
 ROSAMUND. No, but
 From all that by our solitude plagues
 That smite the city spare the soul.
 BECKET. God save him from sickness of the soul!
 Thee too, thy solitude among them
 May that save thee! Doth he ber me?
 ROSAMUND. I warrant him.
 BECKET. He is marvellous thee.
 ROSAMUND. Likier the King.
 BECKET. No, daughter.
 ROSAMUND. Ay,
 Till his nose rises; he will be worse.
 BECKET. Ev'n so; but think the King: farewell!
 ROSAMUND. My lord, the city of armed men.
 BECKET. Ev'n so; farewell!
 ROSAMUND. I will but pass
 vespers,
 And breathe one prayer for my lord the King,
 His child and mine own soul, return.
 BECKET. Pray for me too: need of prayer have I.
 [ROSAMUND kneels and
 Dan John, how much we lose, vespers,
 Lacking the love of woman and of
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. More gentle; for of your wives you
 Find one a slut whose fairest lines
 Foul as her dust-cloth, if she use one
 So charged with tongue, that thread of thought
 Is broken ere it joins — a shrew t
 Whose evil song far on into the
 Thrills to the topmost tile — n
 but death;
 One slow, fat, white, a burthen
 hearth;

one that being thwarted over
 weeps herself into the place of
 power;
 no an *uxor pauperis Ibyci*.
 the household homemaking bee,
 help! but we, we have the blessed
 virgin
 orship, and our Mother Church
 r bride;
 l the souls we saved and father'd
 ro
 eet us as our babes in Paradiso.
 noise was that? she told us of
 m'd men
 n the city. Will you not with-
 aw?
 KENT. I once was out with Henry
 the days
 Henry loved me, and we came
 on
 -fowl sitting on her nest, so still
 'd my hand and touch'd; she did
 not stir;
 ow had frozen round her, and she
 t
 dead upon a heap of ice-cold
 gs.
 how this love, this mother, runs
 o' all
 world God made — even the beast
 - the bird!
 N OF SALISBURY. Ay, still a lover
 the beast and bird?
 use arm'd men — will you not
 de yourself?
 uce the fierce De Broes from
 dwood Castle,
 suil our Holy Mother lest she
 ood
 ng o'er this hard egg, the world,
 d send
 hole heart's heat into it, till it
 ak
 oung angels. Pray you, hide
 urself.
 ET. There was a little fair-
 r'd Norman maid
 n my mother's house: if Rosal-
 nd is
 rld's rose, as her name imports
 - she
 v world's lily.
 OF SALISBURY. Ay, and what
 er?
 ET. She died of leprosy.
 OF SALISBURY. I know not why
 these old things back again, my
 ET. The drowning man, they
 remembers all

The chances of his life, just are he
 dies.
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. Ay — but these
 arm'd men — will you drown your-
 self?
 He loses half the meed of martyrdom
 Who will be martyr when he might
 escape.
 BECKET. What day of the week?
 Tuesday?
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. Tuesday, my
 lord.
 BECKET. On a Tuesday was I born,
 and on a Tuesday
 Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly
 Forth from Northampton; on a Tues-
 day pass'd
 From England into bitter banishment;
 On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me
 The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;
 On a Tuesday from mine exile I re-
 turn'd,
 And on a Tuesday —
 [TRACY enters, then FITZURNE, DE
 BRITO, and DE MORVILLE.
 MONKS following]
 — on a Tuesday — Tracy!
 [A long silence broken by FITZURNE
 saying, contemptuously]
 God help thee!
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. [Aside] How
 the good Archbishop reddens!
 He never yet could brook the note of
 scorn.
 FITZURNE. My lord, we bring a
 message from the King
 Beyond the water; will you have it
 alone,
 Or with those listeners near you?
 BECKET. As you will.
 FITZURNE. Nay, as you will.
 BECKET. Nay, as you will.
 JOHN OF SALISBURY. Why then
 Better perhaps to speak with them
 apart.
 Let us withdraw.
 [All go out except the four KNIGHTS
 and BECKET]
 FITZURNE. We are all alone with
 him.
 Shall I not smite him with his own
 cross-staff?
 DE MORVILLE. No, look! the door
 is open: let him be.
 FITZURNE. The King condemns your
 excommunicating
 BECKET. This is no secret, but a
 public matter.
 In here again!
 [JOHN OF SALISBURY and MONKS return]
 Now, sirs, the King's commands!

FITZURSE. The King beyond the water, thro' our voices,
Commands you to be dutiful and leal
To your young King on this side of the water,
Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.
What! you would make his coronation void
By cursing those who crown'd him!
Out upon you!

BECKET. Reginald, all men know I loved the Prince.
His father gave him to my care, and I
Became his second father: he had his faults,
For which I would have laid mine own life down
To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,
And love him next after my lord his father.
Rather than dim the splendour of his crown
I fain would treble and quadruple it
With revenues, realms, and golden provinces
So that were done in equity.

FITZURSE. You have broken
Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King —
Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances
In England, that he calls you oversea
To answer for it in his Norman courts.

BECKET. Prate not of bonds, for never, oh, never again
Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea
Divide me from the mother church of England,
My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!
Oh, ay — the bells rang out even to deafening,
Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns
In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,
Sobs, laughter, cries: they spread their raiment down
Before me — would have made my pathway flowers,
Save that it was mid-winter in the street,
But full mid-summer in those honest hearts.

FITZURSE. The King commands you
to absolve the bishops
Whom you have excommunicated.

BECKET. I?
Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.

FITZURSE. But you advise
Pope.

BECKET. And so
They have but to submit.

THE FOUR KNIGHTS. The King
mands you.

We are all King's men.

BECKET. King's men
should know

That their own King closed w
last July

That I should pass the censures
Church

On those that crown'd young H
this realm,

And trampled on the rights of
bury.

FITZURSE. What! dare you
the King with treachery?

He sanction thee to excommunic
The prelates whom he chose to
his son!

BECKET. I spake no word of
ery, Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make
To all the archbishops, bishop

ates, barons,
Monks, knights, five hundred, th

there and heard.

Nay, you yourself were there

heard yourself.

FITZURSE. I was not there.

BECKET. I saw you th

FITZURSE. I w

BECKET. You were. I never
anything.

FITZURSE. He makes the l
traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

JOHN OF SALISBURY [*drawing* l
aside]. O my god

Speak with them privately on th
after.

You see they have been revelling
fear

Are braced and brazen'd up
Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

BECKET. And yet the
Of mine, my brawls, when thos

name themselves
Of the King's part, have broken

our barns,
Wasted our diocese, outraged o

ants,
Lifted our produce, driven our

out —
Why they, your friends, those r
the De Brocs,

They stood on Dover beach to
me,

slew my stags in mine own manor
ore,
ted, poor brute, my sumpter-
ule,
er'd the vessel full of Gascon
ine,
d King's present, carried off the
sks,
half the crew, dungeon'd the other
all
ensey Castle —

MORVILLE. Why not rather then,
be so, complain to your young
ing,
nish of your own authority?
KET. Mine enemies barr'd all
cess to the boy.
knew he loved me.

Hugh, how proudly you exalt
our head!

When they seek to overturn our
ghts,

o leave of king, or mortal man,
them straight again. Alone I
it.

o the King the things that are
e King's,
ose of God to God.

URSE. Threats! threats!
hear him.

will he excommunicate all the
orld?

[*The KNIGHTS come round BECKET*]
TRACY. He shall not.

BRITO. Well, as yet —
should be grateful —

h not excommunicated me.

KET. Because thou wast *born* ex-
communicate.

r spied in thee one gleam of grace.

BRITO. Your Christian's Chris-
an charity!

KET. By St. Denis —

BRITO. Ay, by St. Denis, now
ill he flame out,

ose his head as old St. Denis did.

KET. Ye think to scare me from
y loyalty

d and to the Holy Father. No!

all the swords in England flash'd
bove me

to fall at Henry's word or
ours —

all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon
arth

d from the heights of all the
rones of her kings,

ag the world against me, I would
and

d with the full authority of
ome,

Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
First of the foremost of their files, who
die

For God, to people heaven in the great
day

When God makes up his jewels. Once
I fled —

Never again, and you — I marvel at
you —

Ye know what is between us. Ye have
sworn

Yourselves my men when I was Chan-
cellor —

My vassals — and yet threaten your
Archbishop

In his own house.

KNIGHTS. Nothing can be between
us

That goes against our fealty to the King.

FITZURSE. And in his name we
charge you that ye keep

This traitor from escaping.

BECKET. Rest you easy,
For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.
Here, here, here will you find me.

DE MORVILLE. Know you not
You have spoken to the peril of your
life?

BECKET. As I shall speak again.

FITZURSE, DE TRACY, and DE BRITO.
To arms!

[*They rush out, DE MORVILLE
lingers*]

BECKET. De Morville,
I had thought so well of you; and even
now

You seem the least assassin of the
four.

Oh, do not damn yourself for company!
Is it too late for me to save your soul?

I pray you for one moment stay and
speak.

DE MORVILLE. Becket, it is too late.
[*Exit*]

BECKET. Is it too late?
Too late on earth may be too soon in
hell.

KNIGHTS [*in the distance*]. Close the
great gate — ho, there — upon the
town.

BECKET'S RETAINERS. Shut the hall-
doors. [A pause]

BECKET. You hear them, brother
John;

Why do you stand so silent, brother
John?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. For I was mus-
ing on an ancient saw,

Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,
Is strength less strong when hand-in-

hand with grace?

Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus.

Thomas,

Why should you heat yourself for such as these?

BECKET. Methought I answer'd moderately enough.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. As one that blows the coal to cool the fire.

My lord, I marvel why you never lean on any man's advising but your own.

BECKET. Is it so, Dan John? well, what should I have done?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. You should have taken counsel with your friends

Before these bandits brake into your presence.

They seek — you make — occasion for your death.

BECKET. My counsel is already taken, John.

I am prepared to die.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. We are sinners all,

The best of all not all-prepared to die.

BECKET. God's will be done!

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Ay, well. God's will be done!

GRIM [*re-entering*]. My lord, the knights are arming in the garden Beneath the sycamore.

BECKET. Good! let them arm.

GRIM. And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,

The apostate monk that was with Randolph here.

He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

BECKET. No fear!

GRIM. No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The Monks flee*]

BECKET [*rising*]. Our dovecote flown!

I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

BECKET. Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?

Valour and holy life should go together. Why should all monks be cowards?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Are they so?

I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

BECKET. Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

GRIM. May they not say you dared not show yourself

In your old place? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene*]

You should attend the office, grim heart.

They fear you slain: they dream know not what.

BECKET. Ay, monks, not me.

GRIM. I am a monk, I

Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us. Some would stand by you to t

BECKET. Your

JOHN OF SALISBURY. He sa

tend the office.'

BECKET. Attend the

Why then — The Cross! — wh

my Cross before me?

Methought they would have bra

with it, John. [GRIM

GRIM. I! Would that I cou

thy cross indeed!

BECKET. The Mitre!

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Will y

it? — there!

[BECKET puts on ti

BECKET. T

I go to meet my King!

[Puts on

GRIM. To meet th

[Crashes on the doors as the

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Why

move with such a stateline

Can you not hear them yonde

storm,

Battering the doors, and breaki

the walls?

BECKET. Why do the heath

My two good friends,

What matters murder'd here,

der'd there?

And yet my dream foretold my

dom

In mine own church. It is Go

Go on.

Nay, drag me not. We must n

to fly.

SCENE THIRD. — North Transept

terbury Cathedral.

[On the right hand a flight of steps

to the Choir, another flight on

leading to the North Aisle.

afternoon slowly darkening

thunder now and then of an ap

ing storm. MONKS heard

the service. ROSAMUND kne

ROSAMUND. O blessed saint,

ous Benedict, —

These arm'd men in the city

fierce faces —

holy follower founded Canterbury —
 That dear head which now is Canterbury,
 him, he saved my life, he saved
 my child,
 him, his blood would darken
 Henry's name;
 him till all as saintly as thyself
 as the searching flame of purgatory,
 pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters*]

Is it they? Coming! He is not here —

et, thank heaven. O save him!

[*Goes up steps leading to choir*]

BECKET [*entering, forced along by JOHN OF SALISBURY and GRIM*].
 O, I tell you!

not bear a hand upon my person,
 do you force me thus against my will?

M. My lord, we force you from our enemies.

BECKET. As you would force a king
 from being crown'd.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. We must not
 force the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops. MONKS come down from the stairs that lead to the choir*]

MONKS. Here is the great Archbishop! He lives! he lives!

With him, and be glorified together.

BECKET. Together? . . . get you
 back! go on with the office.

MONKS. Come, then, with us to
 espers.

BECKET. How can I come
 you so block the entry? Back, I
 say!

With the office. Shall not
 heaven be served

earth's last earthquake clash'd the
 minster-bells,

the great deeps were broken up
 gain,

iss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters*]

MONKS. The murderers, hark!
 hide! let us hide!

BECKET. What do these people fear?
 MONKS. Those arm'd men in the
 cloister.

BECKET. Be not such cravens!
 go out and meet them.

M AND OTHERS. Shut the doors!
 'll not have him slain before our
 ee.

[*They close the doors of the transept.*
Knocking]

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the
 doors! [*Knocking*]

BECKET. Why, these are our own
 monks who follow'd us!

And will you bolt them out, and have
 them slain?

Undo the doors: the church is not a
 castle:

Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you
 deaf?

What, have I lost authority among you?
 Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter MONKS from cloister*]

Come in, my friends, come in!
 Nay, faster, faster!

MONKS. Oh, my lord Archbishop,
 A score of knights all arm'd with swords
 and axes —

To the choir, to the choir!

[*MONKS divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears BECKET along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone*]

BECKET. Shall I too pass to the choir,
 And die upon the Patriarchal throne
 Of all my predecessors?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. No, to the
 crypt!

Twenty steps down. Stumble not in
 the darkness,

Lest they should seize thee.

GRIM. To the crypt? no — no,
 To the chapel of St. Blaise beneath the
 roof!

JOHN OF SALISBURY [*pointing upward and downward*]. That way, or this!
 Save thyself either way.

BECKET. Oh, no, not either way, nor
 any way

Save by that way which leads thro'
 night to light.

Not twenty steps, but one.

And fear not I should stumble in the
 darkness,

Not tho' it be their hour, the power of
 darkness,

But my hour too, the power of light in
 darkness!

I am not in the darkness but the light,
 Seen by the Church in Heaven, the
 Church on earth —

The power of life in death to make her
 free!

[*Enter the four KNIGHTS. JOHN OF SALISBURY flies to the altar of St. Benedict*]

FITZURSE. Here, here, King's men!
[Catches hold of the last flying MONK]

Where is the traitor Becket?

MONK. I am not he! I am not he,
 my lord.

I am not he indeed!

FITZURSE. Hence to the fiend!
[Pushes him away]

Where is this treble traitor to the King?

DE TRACY. Where is the Archbishop,
 Thomas Becket?

BECKET. Here.

No traitor to the King, but Priest of God,
 Primate of England.

[Descending into the transept]
 I am he ye seek.

What would ye have of me?

FITZURSE. Your life.

DE TRACY. Your life.

DE MORVILLE. Save that you will
 absolve the bishops.

BECKET. Never, —

Except they make submission to the
 Church.

You had my answer to that cry before.

DE MORVILLE. Why, then you are a
 dead man; flee!

BECKET. I will not.

I am readier to be slain, than thou to
 slay.

Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a
 heart

To bathe this sacred pavement with my
 blood.

God pardon thee and these, but God's
 full curse

Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm
 One of my flock!

FITZURSE. Was not the great gate
 shut?

They are thronging in to vespers — half
 the town.

We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him
 and carry him!

Come with us — nay — thou art our
 prisoner — come!

DE MORVILLE. Ay, make him pris-
 oner, do not harm the man.

*[FITZURSE lays hold of the ARCH-
 BISHOP'S pall]*

BECKET. Touch me not!

DE BRITO. How the good
 priest gods himself!

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

FITZURSE. I will not only touch, but
 drag thee hence.

BECKET. Thou art my man, thou
 art my vassal. Away!

*[Flings him off till he reels almost
 to falling]*

DE TRACY *[lays hold of the]*
 Come; as he said, thou
 prisoner.

BECKET. Down!

[Throws him]

FITZURSE *[advances with drawn]*
 I told thee that I should re-
 thee!

BECKET. Profligate pander!

FITZURSE. Do you he
 strike, strike.

*[Strikes off the ARCHBISHOP'S
 and wounds him in the forehead]*

BECKET *[covers his eyes with his]*
 I do commend my cause to God

Virgin,

St. Denis of France and St. Al-
 England,

And all the tutelar Saints of Can-
[GRIM wraps his arms about]

ARCHBISHOP]

Spare this defence, dear brother

*[TRACY has arisen, and
 proaches, hesitatingly,
 sword raised]*

FITZURSE. Strike him

ROSAMUND *[rushing down steps to*
the choir]. No, No, No, No

FITZURSE. This wanton

Morville,

Hold her away.

DE MORVILLE. I hold her.

ROSAMUND *[held back by DE*
 VILLE, and stretching out her hands]

Mercy

As you would hope for mercy.

FITZURSE. Strike

GRIM. O God, O noble knight,
 sacrilege!

Strike our Archbishop in his own
 dral!

The Pope, the King, will curse
 the whole world

Abhor you; ye will die the death of
 dogs!

Nay, nay, good Tracy. *[Lifts]*

FITZURSE. Answer not, but

DE TRACY. There is my
 then.

*[Sword falls on GRIM'S arm,
 glances from it, wounding]*

GRIM. Mine arm is

I can no more — fight out to the
 fight — die

Conqueror.

*[Staggering into the chapel
 Benedict]*

BECKET *[falling on his knees]*.
 right hand of Power —

Power and great glory — for
 Church, O Lord —

Thy hands, O Lord — into Thy
hands! — *[Sinks prone]*

BRITO. This last to rid thee of a
world of brawls! *[Kills him]*

aitor's dead, and will arise no more.

FITZURSE. Nay, have we still'd him?
What! the great Archbishop!

he breathe? No?

TRACY. No, Reginald, he is
dead. *[Storm bursts¹]*

DE MORVILLE. Will the earth gape
and swallow us?

DE BRITO. The deed's done —
Away!

*[DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE,
rush out, crying 'King's men!']*

DE MORVILLE follows slowly.

*Flashes of lightning thro' the
Cathedral. ROSAMUND seen*

kneeling by the body of BECKET]

A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were
it.

THE MASQUERADERS

(1894)

By HENRY ARTHUR JONES

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

WHEN one is to consider a dramatist, it is perhaps a little inconsistent to spend of the time estimating him as a critic. But in the career of Henry Arthur Jones there is undoubtedly no characteristic more forcible than his attitude toward English drama, and none which gives him a greater right to lead in a movement for its betterment. And, because the ideals of Jones, the critic, have always put into practice by Jones, the dramatist, it is not surprising to find that the career of "Mrs. Dane's Defence" is more severely criticized by the public for his attitude than any other of his immediate contemporaries. Take away from Henry Arthur Jones his critical faculty, based upon live ideas, and he is still as good in technique as Pinero; add to this stagecraft what you have taken away, and you cannot but conclude that Henry Arthur Jones is the leading figure in the modern English drama of his generation.

When "The Lie" (1915) was given its première in New York, one felt like re-estimating Henry Arthur Jones, after a quarter of a century. For one detected that his play was cast in the mould of his early period, and gave us the portraiture of a dramatist who reflected some of Mr. Jones's philosophy of the changing times. Even though he was out of date, he still proved himself to be a solid credit to the English stage, however much his social conscience was the conscience of an age and not only slightly touched by democratic problems.

In comparison with the dramatists of the "New Theatre", he is old-fashioned; but in the British dramatist's break from the past, we must not discount the conservative force of Jones. He never sacrificed sincerity for theatricalism. He has always been interested in the moral philosophy of life. After reading "The Lie", and with vigor and surety of technique, it is profitable to turn to Mr. Jones's earlier dramas, like "The Middleman" (1889), "Judah" (1890), and "Michael and the Lost Angel" (1896), which were accounted "advanced" when they were first produced, and contrast them with the social problem dramas of the present. What must be realized is that Henry Arthur Jones has his historical position, and that now, rather than accept from him a wider range of sympathy, we necessarily get from him a more definite expression of what he has held to be true in life for many years. Even in his earlier essays — for Mr. Jones is always writing prefaces and essays on the theatre — he is pleading for permanent things, rather than for experimental things; and he is doing in the same manner, though with a deeper and more authoritative tone, what he was criticized in the early days when he wrote the preface for "Saints and Sinners".

Coming, as "The Lie" did, toward the end of the first year of the Great War, it is taken as marking a definite date in the career of Mr. Jones. But, as he grows older, he does not seem to abate in the ease with which his pen writes dialogue. He turns unreservedly to his delightful "Mary Goes First" (1913), an example of the purest and best High Comedy the modern English drama has produced.

In the history of the English stage, Henry Arthur Jones has reached his after varied apprenticeship. Born September 28, 1851, he spent his first years in the village of Grandborough, Buckinghamshire, where his father, Sylvanus, worked a farm. At the grammar school of Winslow he received his education when only about thirteen was placed with a commercial firm, even though his tastes were decidedly literary at the time.

One can imagine the difficulties under which he wrote his essays, poems, and stories during this period — none of which brought to him more than the satisfaction of self-expression.

While visiting a London theatre, in 1870, his resolve to turn playwright was formed, though the immediate activity resulting therefrom was a three-volume novel which, it is said, took some three years to finish. The plot, in after years, found its way into "The Silver King" (1882), a successful melodrama, written in conjunction with Henry Herman. This play won him financial independence, and he was able, thereafter, to turn his attention in other directions.

Jones's first piece, "It's Only Round the Corner" (1878), was produced at the Theatre Royal, Exeter. But it was not until 1881 that he gave up business altogether to devote himself to playwriting.

It is interesting to note that 1882 is the earliest date of any of the lectures or essays in his volume, "The Renaissance of the English Drama"; and as Jones, as dramatist, has allowed hardly a year to pass without a new play, so Jones, the critic, has kept pace, and "The Renaissance of the English Drama" was followed by "The Foundations of a National Drama", with essays covering the period 1896-1912.

As an actor Mr. Jones has figured in his own plays — in "A Clerical Comedy" (1879), for example, with Miss Winifred Emery. As a manager, he presented "The Crusaders" (1891) at the Avenue Theatre, London. As a critic, he defended himself from critics — notably in the case of "Saints and Sinners" (1892), the first of his plays to gain marked recognition, and in the facetious dedication of the comedy, "The Case of Rebellious Susan" (1894). "Mrs. Dane's Decision" (1900) marks the culmination of a certain perfection of style. But Jones went on further in his technique, and "Mary Goes First" (1913) is a play whose plot and characterization are less in accord with the demands of the commercial theatre and more in the rhythm of real literary attainment.

Mr. Jones, fortunately, has been a believer in the printed drama, and has published the larger number of his plays, sometimes going so far as to publish them before their actual production. This is the case of "The Divine Comedy" (1913) and of "The Theatre of Ideas" (1915), wherein is contained that very little one-act play of North Cornish life, "Grace Mary", which affords an interesting comparison with John Masefield's "The Tragedy of Nan."

In the long list of his plays, there is but one adaptation — Ibsen's "A Doll's House", called "Breaking a Butterfly" (1884), and given a happy ending. His perpetration on his part was in accord with the demands of the English stage at that time; and Mr. Jones has repudiated what he was forced to do, in the introduction to M. Filon's "The English Stage", wherein he has to say (1896):

When I came up to London sixteen years ago, to try for a place among the English playwrights, a rough translation from the German version of Ibsen's "Doll's House" was put into my hands, and I was told that if it could be translated

a sympathetic play, a ready opening would be found for it on the London stage. I know nothing of Ibsen, but I knew a great deal of Robertson and Byron. From these circumstances came the adaptation called "Breaking utterly." I pray it may be forgotten from this time, or remembered only in leniency amongst other transgressions of my dramatic youth and ignorance.

Henry Arthur Jones has thrown his energies against the Philistine, and in all plays we find only a slight variation of the same theme. He has likewise a gallery of non-conformist ministers, suggesting in their austerity some of the ritual atmosphere which he must have observed during his early youth. In "Judah" (1890) and in "Michael and His Lost Angel" (1896) his clerical type is definitely fixed in our minds — men with a stoic resolve to confess their guilt, for in each instance they are compromised, and in the end show their spiritual religious unfitness in their human thirst for life. In "The Hypocrite" (1906), a minister dominates the situation. Mr. Jones has repeated himself often in his career. In "Judah" and in "The Rogue's Comedy" (1896) we see a peculiar similarity in the treatment of mental healing and clairvoyance. In "Mrs. Dane's Defence" (1900), "Whitewashing Julia" (1903), and "Joseph and His Brothers" (1904), he played upon the same string of gossip to show the evil consequences of idle talk. *Mrs. Dane*, with her past, was the tragical victim. The same, in "Whitewashing Julia", was the culpable conqueror of conventional morality, and in "Joseph Entangled" an innocent situation was talked up to a point of dire consequences.

It was George Bernard Shaw who wrote about the English drama in this regard:

"The conflict of individuals with law and convention can be dramatized like other human conflicts; but they are purely judicial; and the fact that we are much more curious about the suppressed relations between the man and the woman than about the relations between both and our courts of law and our juries of matrons, produces that sensation of evasion, of dissatisfaction, of fundamental irrelevance, of shallowness, of useless disagreeableness, of total failure to edify and partial failure to interest. . . .

Both Jones and Pinero are open to this criticism. But, it should be emphasized more than once that ideas, logically followed, without having to resort to the actual on all occasions, make Jones greater than Pinero. It is easier to move the *persona* into situations than to have the striking situations come from the character or weakness of character. "Mrs. Dane's Defence", while theatrically effective, and dependent, very largely, upon the cross-examination scene of *Sir Carfax*, is, none the less, organically sustained, because it is a true exposé of psychology, rather than a theatrial handling of stage emotion. We remember, in the trial agreement, what George Moore, in his "Impressions and Opinions", says of Mr. Jones:

"I am drawn to sympathize with Mr. Jones's talent because he desires the new, is in touch with modern life and thought; he says almost what he wants to say and he wants to say far more than any other dramatist, and having obtained a remarkable mastery over that most obstinate vehicle of literary expres-

sion — the stage, one that seems to rebel against all innovation — he introduced into his work far more personal observation of life than any other. What, then, is wanting to complete a very real talent? Taste: a vein of commonness degrades, if it does not wholly ruin, his best work.

In "The Theatre of Ideas", Mr. Jones estimates his own work. He calls "Saints and Sinners" as the best that he could do at that time. And that he was saved through Matthew Arnold's generous advocacy. His popular success, "The Dancing Girl" (1891), was followed by "The Crusaders" (1892), which, as a producing manager, he lavished most of the fortune he had made in his previous play, giving William Morris a free hand in supplying the scenery and furniture. "The Bauble Shop" (1893) followed this. And it was in his mood of sentimental comedy that he wrote "The Masqueraders" (1894), just preceding "The Case of Rebellious Susan."

Before giving facts regarding the play which has been selected for this study it is just as well for us to get clearly in mind Mr. Jones's attitude toward the theatre. Without his strong stand taken against Philistinism and Mrs. Grundy, the soil out of which more recent social drama in England has come would not have been as well prepared to receive the new growth; nor would the harvest have been as rich. In Mr. Jones's prefaces and essays, we see a slow evolution of ideas. His motto for his intense fight is found in Matthew Arnold's "Irish Essays." He is writing on the French play in London, and is making a plea for a new English Theatre. He says, in the course of criticizing the French players, headed by Bernhardt:

What then, finally, are we to learn from the marvellous success and popularity of the performances at the Gaiety Theatre? What is the conclusion which it is right and rational for us to draw? Surely it is this: "The theatre is irresistible; *organize the theatre.*" Surely, if we wish to stand less in awe of it, and to have clear notions of the consequences of things, it is our duty to reach the conclusion that we should come.

With this injunction sounding in his ears, Jones began writing on the new theatre. And we find him discussing fully the relation between the play and the mob, and the part religion should occupy in drama. He works himself out a sincere, frenzied moral attitude toward the theatre which we find Matthew Arnold taking towards literature — weighing the right of the public to be entertained in the theatre.

I have fought [writes Mr. Jones] for a recognition of the distinction between the art of the drama on the one hand, and popular amusement on the other. I have fought for the entire freedom of the modern dramatist, for his right to portray all aspects of human life, all passions, all opinions; for the freedom of search, the freedom of phrase, the freedom of treatment, that are as essential to the Bible and to Shakespeare, that must necessarily be allowed to the modern writer and to every artist that sees humanity as a whole. I have fought for sanity and wholesomeness, for largeness and breadth of view. I have fought against the cramping and deadening influences of modern pessimistic realism, its littleness, its ugliness, its narrowness, its parochial aims.

in "The Renaissance of the English Drama", Mr. Jones asks his readers: if they ask a dramatist to portray, faithfully, a phase of life, should they deny him the right to discuss the religious undercurrent of an age which makes, one way or the other, the character? Because, he concludes, they either believe religion to have no negative as a force, or they fear the consequences of the struggle between science and belief.

Then he asks, what should we require in drama? And thereupon he contrasts the dramatic with the theatrical: the amusement coming from life and the fun evolved from the falsifications of life. This naturally brings him to the consideration of the "dramatic" as opposed to "theatrical."

Human life [he writes] is a larger thing than the theatre, and the theatre is powerful only in so far as it recognizes this, and allows the chief things of life to play to be not the cheap, mechanical tricks of the playwright, the effect-curtains, the machinery of cleverly devised situations, but the study of life and character, the portraiture of the infinitely subtle workings of the human heart.

And because Mr. Jones has always wanted a wide and searching knowledge of life, we may take the dramas he has written as representative of a new spirit, — a spirit and far more modern than the plays of Robertson or Byron. The fact is, so sincere has been Jones's search after the human qualities in men and women, that he has never gone so far as Pinero in seeing permanent worth in conduct. He is more interested in conduct and character. He is more concerned about life outside of the theatre, however much his problem has been to put life into the theatre through dramatic form. He has always sought for rectitude. Pinero, he, too, has compromised. He, too, has declared himself belonging to an older generation by the stand he has taken against the newer realism. His defence of Victorianism was that, however crude the Victorian drama, it was in it.

It is strange how critics disagree. Jones, while recognizing that Robertson drew a false and a tragi-comic figure in *Eccles*, declares that most of the Robertsonian characters and scenes were as false as the falsities and theatricalities he [Robertson] supposed himself to be superseding. P. P. Howe, in his "Dramatic Portraits", lodges the same criticism against Jones:

As a dramatist of "The Liars" [he declares], knew the names of all the characters and sauces, but very little about the heart of man.

Every day has its fashion. But not every day creates its masterpiece! We will find it profitable to study Mr. Jones's position toward National Drama, Artistic Theatre, and Censorship, and to contrast his essays in "The Foundation of a National Drama" with Archer and Barker's "Schemes and Estimates of National Theatre."

It cannot be said of Jones that he grew up impervious to the ideas of Ruskin, Morris, or Matthew Arnold. But he has never developed within himself the social conscience that one now finds in Galsworthy. "The Middleman" is not filled with the irony which would have shown Mr. Jones more in sympathy with the philosophy of labour. He accepted Ruskin and Morris on their intellectual rather than on their practical side, with the consequence that none of his

plays have the moral, social fervour of "Justice" or "The Silver Box." D vitality, Mr. Jones has never been able to escape the limitation of his ov tion, and this limitation has marked him definitely as part of the soci England toward the latter part of the nineteenth century.

"The Masqueraders" is not Mr. Jones's best play; it is selected as re tive of a period when he was slowly developing his powers. It has bee not in preference to "Michael and His Lost Angel" or "Mrs. Dane's D "Mary Goes First", but as bringing to the attention of the reader the manner of an earlier period, which is every bit worth while studying. It be as permanently representative of Mr. Jones as "The Case of Rebellion but it has charm and grace, and is an excellent measure of the Jones of t nineties.

William Archer describes "The Masqueraders" as follows:

"The Crusaders" was a satirical, this is a sentimental, romance. A satire upon social idealisms was the main theme of the earlier play; in the one, the main theme is an ecstatic love-story, upon which certain pat satire on social corruption are incidentally embroidered.

It is interesting from the very fact that in some places it is crude, and places it has a distinction of style which forecasts the maturer technique of later plays. In contrast with the sentimental comedies of Robertson and even of Grundy and Carton, there is, in this play, certain premonition of independence to be found in Mr. Jones's later plays.

It cannot be claimed for Mr. Jones, the dramatist, that he is a force in the sense that Ibsen is. Though he has been conservative, he has right brief against the realistic drama as opposed to reality in drama. He had enemy to naturalism, as any lover of the ultimate triumph of art would has always shown the dignity of his art by revealing life as greater than th of the dramatist. As a critic, he has moved the dramatic idea forward. more than can be said for Pinero. As a philosophical mind must always what in advance of its environment, so, in a dual rôle, Henry Arthur J critic, has, throughout his career, always been preparing the road in ad Henry Arthur Jones, the dramatist. Jones has always been interested in of ideas, but though he has fought for the independence of the English stag never been able to escape the limitations of his inherited prejudices and t dices of his age.

THE MASQUERADERS

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

By HENRY ARTHUR JONES

"I think we had better not tell this story in England, for no one would believe it. — I myself was close to the squadron, and distinctly saw what happened."

LORD ROBERTS, *Forty-one Years in India.*

MY DEAR GEORGE ALEXANDER,

This is one of the many original plays of English authorship that you have successfully produced during your long and honoured management of the St. James' Theatre.

May I gratefully recall our pleasant association during its production, and your striking performance of David Remon, by asking you to accept its dedication in its present form?

Gratefully yours,

HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

COPYRIGHT, 1909, BY HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

Reprinted by permission of, and special arrangement with the author, and the publisher, Samuel French.

ACT I

SCENE — THE COURTYARD OF THE STAG HOTEL AND ASSEMBLY ROOMS AT
CRANDOVER.

(Four years pass.)

ACT II

SCENE — DRAWING-ROOM AT LADY SKENE'S.

(Nine months pass.)

ACT III

SCENE — PRIVATE SITTING-ROOM AT THE HOTEL PRINCE DE GALLES, NICE.

ACT IV

SCENE — THE OBSERVATORY ON MONT GARIDELLI, MARITIME ALPS, NEAR
NICE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

	<i>Produced by Mr. George Alexander, St. James's Theatre, London, April 28, 1894</i>	<i>Produced by Mr. Frohman, Theatre, New York, December 3,</i>
DAVID REMON	Mr. George Alexander	Mr. Henry Miller
SIR BRICE SKENE	Mr. Herbert Waring	Mr. William Faversham
MONTAGU LUSHINGTON	Mr. Elliot	Mr. J. E. Dodson
EDDIE REMON	Mr. H. V. Esmond	Mr. Joseph Humphreys
THE EARL OF CRANDOVER, <i>Master of the Crandover Hunt</i>	Mr. Ian Robertson	Mr. Guido Marburgh
HON. PERCY BLANCHFLOWER	Mr. A. Vane-Tempest	Mr. Robert Edeson
SIR WINCHMORE WILLS, M.D.	Mr. Graeme Goring	Mr. W. H. Crompton
GEORGE COPELAND	Mr. Ben Webster	Mr. R. Weed
FANCOURT	Mr. Arthur Royston	Mr. Jameson Lee
CARTER	Mr. Guy Lane-Coulson	Mr. Charles Crosby
RANDALL	Mr. J. A. Bentham	Mr. J. B. Hollis
RODNEY	Mr. F. Kinsey Peile	Mr. Edgar Norton
SHARLAND	Mr. A. Bromley- Davenport	Mr. J. P. Sorentz
JIMMY STOKES, <i>an old hunts- man</i>	Mr. William H. Day	Mr. William H. Thompson
BRINKLER, <i>proprietor of "The Stag"</i>	Mr. Alfred Holles	Mr. E. Y. Backus
THOMSON	Mr. F. Loftus	Mr. James Whitman
A SERVANT	Mr. Theo Stewart	Mr. Henry Damon
DULCIE LARONDIE	Mrs. Patrick Campbell	Miss Viola Allen
HELEN LARONDIE, <i>her sister</i>	Miss Granville	Miss Alice Fischer
CHARLEY WISHANGER, <i>after- wards Lady Shalford</i>	Miss Irene Vanbrugh	Miss Elsie de Wolfe
LADY CLARICE REINDEAN, <i>Lord Crandover's daughter</i>	Miss Beryl Faber	Miss Ida Conquest
LADY CRANDOVER	Mrs. Edward Saker	Miss Genevieve Ross

Guests, Dancers, Fox-hunters, Hotel Servants, and Waiters

THE MASQUERADERS

ACT I

— The old courtyard of the Stap
Hotel and Assembly Rooms at Cran-
over, roofed in to form a hall.

right is a bar-counter, surmounted
by a glass casement and windows,
which open and shut down on to the
counter. In the middle of the
counter is a lid, which lifts up and
runs downway. At the back are
steps leading to the Crandover As-
sembly Rooms. On the left the large
old-fashioned gateway of the Inn,
surrounding all round are the old guller-
ns remaining from coaching times.
Plants and banners hung about the
wall. On the outside of bar is hung
a subscription list, in which the
names "Widow and Orphans" and
"Dick Ramsden" are discernible.
Looking in the rooms beyond,
amongst the company are Lord
CRANDOVER, LADY CRANDOVER,
LADY CLARICE REINDEAN, CHARLEY
REINDEAN, MONTAGU LUSHINGTON,
a modern young man, is coming
downstairs]

D CRANDOVER [a jovial English
gent of about fifty speaks to BRINK-
LER. Devilish rum start this of Miss
Clarice's, Brinkler.

BRINKLER [with a grin]. Yes, my

D CRANDOVER. Where is she?
BRINKLER [pointing off into the bar].
In the bar there.

[They all look off, and show great
interest. MONTAGU LUSHING-
TON joins the group]

CHARLEY [a very fast, mannish little
gent, to MONTAGU]. Not bad, eh?

MONTAGU. Exquisite. That divine
curve of the arm as she draws the handle
of the beer machine is really quite
divine.

D CRANDOVER. Does she bring
much business, Brinkler?

BRINKLER. Well, she's brought me
two good customers, my lord.

LORD CRANDOVER. Who are they?

BRINKLER. One of them is Sir Brice
Skene, my lord.

[LADY CRANDOVER exchanges a
look with LADY CLARICE]

LADY CRANDOVER. Is Sir Brice often
here?

[LADY CLARICE is showing in-
terest]

BRINKLER. He's almost lived here
lately, my lady.

LADY CLARICE. [To LADY CRAN-
DOVER, aside, bitterly] What did I tell
you?

LORD CRANDOVER. Who's the other
customer?

BRINKLER. That mad gentleman that
lives at Gerard's Heath, Mr. Remon.
There he is in the bar now.

[They all look off, and show great
interest]

MONTAGU. That pale individual who
is dallying with claret in the corner?

BRINKLER. Yes; that's sixty-nine
Mouton Rothschild. I got it specially
for him. Fancy drinking Mouton
Rothschild!

CHARLEY. The man's looking at us.
[SIR BRICE enters from ball-room, comes
down gradually to group]

LORD CRANDOVER. He's an astron-
omer, isn't he?

BRINKLER. I believe he is something
in that line, my lord. And he's got a
little brother who is likewise touched.

MONTAGU. With the stars, or the bar-
maid?

BRINKLER. Miss Larondle isn't ex-
actly a barmaid, is she, my lord?

LORD CRANDOVER. No; her mother
was distantly related to the Skenes.
Her father came of a good old French
family.

LADY CRANDOVER. The girl might
have done well for herself. We used

to receive her family at the Court and when her father died I interested myself to get her a situation as a governess in a Christian family. But she behaved very badly.

MONTY. When one is a governess in a Christian family, one is compelled to behave badly for the sake of the higher morality.

LADY CRANDOVER. Miss Larondie had thoroughly lost caste. And I should take it as a great favour if Mr. Brinkler would see that she has no chance of — of misconducting herself with —

[SIR BRICE has come up, and LADY CRANDOVER stops embarrassed when she sees him]

SIR BRICE. With whom? Is Miss Larondie about to misconduct herself, Brinkler?

BRINKLER. No, Sir Brice, I trust not.

SIR BRICE. [To LADY CRANDOVER] Have you any reason for supposing that Miss Larondie is about to misconduct herself, Lady Crandover?

LADY CRANDOVER [embarrassed]. I — I am surprised, Sir Brice —

SIR BRICE. Have you any reason for supposing that Miss Larondie is about to misconduct herself?

LADY CRANDOVER. No.

SIR BRICE [politely]. Thank you.

[Goes off into the bar. In crossing the bar he has to pass LADY CLARICE, he bows to her with extreme politeness, she bites her lips, and returns his bow. Exit SIR BRICE into bar]

LADY CLARICE. [To her mother, aside] Oh, I can't bear it!

LADY CRANDOVER. Hush!

LADY CLARICE. He has gone to that girl.

[The next dance begins. The stage gradually clears]

CHARLEY. Our dance, Monty.

MONTY [giving arm]. So your vestal self is dedicate to matrimony and Sir Digby Shalford?

CHARLEY. Yes; he's a trifle washed out; but we are frightfully hard up, and you didn't ask me.

MONTY. My dear Charley, marriage is the last insult one offers to a woman whom one respects. Love if you please —

CHARLEY. Thanks. We'll think about it. By the way, you'll stand a

chance with Clarice now Sir Brice cut her. Her connections will be useful to you.

MONTY. What would Charley settle on her?

CHARLEY. Not much. Clarice will tell me. I'll ask her. What would you do it for? A thousand a year?

MONTY [reproachfully]. No, no. Charley, don't hurt my self-respect.
[They go into the bar]

[Enter EDDIE REMON, a delicate man about twenty, highly refined, nervous, strung, unbalanced. He is introduced by GEORGE COPELAND, a stout, athletic man about forty]

COPELAND. But what's he doing here?

EDDIE. Sun-gazing.

COPELAND. Sun-gazing?

EDDIE. Yes. Look! Here's Sir Brice. She's dragging him through space where the devil they're going to. I don't know.

[Enter DULCIE LARONDIE from the bar]

DULCIE [speaking off into the bar. She has a large key in her hand]. I've forgotten the candle. Sir Brice, would you mind bringing me a candle?

[DAVID REMON enters from bar, holding a lighted candle in his hand. He is a man of about forty, pale, thin, philosophic-looking. SIR BRICE bows quickly, and the two men face each other]

SIR BRICE. Give me that candle, David.

DAVID. Miss Larondie —

[Appealing to her]

DULCIE [stands coquettishly between both of them]. That one shall go to the cellar who makes him the most ridiculous over it.

DAVID [coming towards her]. I will be myself.

SIR BRICE. Give me that candle, David.

DULCIE. Sir Brice, Mr. Remon, make himself far more ridiculous than you.

SIR BRICE. Then let him light the candle.

[Exit into bar. REMON is holding the candle perfectly steady in his hands. DULCIE looks at him]

DULCIE. You're carrying that candle on one side; you're dropping that. [He looks at her, holds it much on one side, and drops the grease] That's

stands a moment or two looking him
and down with comic inspection]
I think that will do. You look
well. Would you mind waiting
till I come back?

[Gravely blows out the candle, and
exit. DAVID stands there.
Pause. COPELAND comes be-
hind him, claps him on the
shoulder]

COPELAND. Davy!

DAVID [turns round, cordially]. My
fellow! [Very warm hand-shaking]
You're coming to stay?

COPELAND. No, to say good-bye. I
take the night mail back, and to-
morrow I'm off to Alaska. I'm sick
of this nineteenth-century civilisation.
I can't do a bit of climbing, and get
re-oxidised.

DAVID. What is it this time?

COPELAND. Mount Saint Elias,
eighteen hundred feet high, and snow at the sea-

DAVID. Davy, your bottle of claret
is in the bar.

DAVID. But Miss Larondie has not
come back from the cellar.

DAVID. She came up the other
night. She's in the bar talking to
George Skene. [The band strikes up
a bright dance-tune. EDDIE puts
his fingers in his ears] Oh! oh! oh!
Wretched musicians!

COPELAND. What's the matter?

DAVID. They are playing horribly
bad, as if the world were full of
fools. I must get a tin kettle and
beat them out.

[DAVID goes up to the bar, shows
intense mortification, conquers
it. Exit EDDIE into ball-room.

DAVID calls "Brinkler"]

BRINKLER enters with a bottle and
glasses]

DAVID. Brinkler, my claret here.

[BRINKLER brings bottle in cradle
and two glasses, puts them down
on the other side of stage]

BRINKLER. Mouton Rothschild,
fine.

DAVID. So I'm mad to drink the
vintages, eh Brinkler? [BRINK-
LER looks surprised] I heard you say so.

BRINKLER. Well, it is unusual, sir.

DAVID. You're right. A man must
know who drinks the rarest wines
before he can get salted beer and doc-
tored gin. Still, you must humour me,
Brinkler. [BRINKLER seems puzzled]

Though what's the good of climbing
Mount Elias, I don't know.

[Turning to COPELAND]

COPELAND. To get to the top of it.

DAVID. But what's the good of
getting to the top of it?

COPELAND. What's the good of get-
ting to the top of anything? You've
spent the last dozen years of your life
and nearly blinded yourself to solve
the mystery of sun-spots.

DAVID. But sun-spots are practical.

COPELAND. Practical?

DAVID. Who solves the mystery of
sun-spots may show the way to control
the future harvests of the world; and
who controls the harvests of the world
will provide cheaper swipes and smaller
beer for Brinkler's grandchildren, eh,
Brinkler?

BRINKLER [comes forward]. Sir?

DAVID. I was saying that the elect
of the earth, and by the elect of the
earth I mean every man who has a
vote, may get cheaper swipes when I
have solved my problem of sun-spots.

BRINKLER. Sir?

DAVID. Your grandchildren shall be
amply provided for, Brinkler. [Turns to
COPELAND] Drink. [Exit BRINKLER
puzzled] A prosperous voyage and a
safe return, old fellow. [Drinks] I've
drunk to your folly, now drink to mine.

COPELAND. Tell me all about it,
Davy. It is folly, then?

DAVID. No, if folly is happiness,
folly is the greatest wisdom.

COPELAND. You are happy, then?

DAVID [nods]. Yes. And wretched,
beyond all telling.

COPELAND. Why?

DAVID. I shall never win her.
She'll never be mine, George. And if
she were, — that might be the saddest
thing of all.

COPELAND. How?

DAVID. When the desired one be-
comes the possessed one, her beauty
fades. I love her, George, and I want
to keep on loving her. [COPELAND
laughs] Laugh at me! I laugh at my-
self. I was forty-two last August.
You know pretty much what my life
has been. Drink one glass, old boy,
to the days when we were twenty-five,
and to our old loves.

COPELAND [drinks]. Our old loves.
Your last one, Davy?

DAVID. Ah! She soured me, but
she didn't break my heart. And she
drove me to my sun-spots. So God

bless her! God bless them all! Whatever I've been in practice, George, in theory I've always had the most perfect loyalty to womankind of any man that ever breathed. [COPELAND *laughs*] Don't laugh, you rascal! I meant it! I've always kept my reverence for them, and I've always known that some day or the other I should meet one who would make me worship her with the purest devotion a man can feel for a woman.

COPELAND. And you have met her?

DAVID [*nods, looking towards bar*]. She's in there, flirting with the choicest blackguard in England.

COPELAND. You poor dear fool! You always would pay half-a-crown for anything you could get for twopence.

DAVID. Yes, but I always knew what a fool I was. Do you think I don't know what a fool I am now? George, it's not any empress, not any goddess, but just that girl in the bar there that owns me body and soul.

COPELAND. Pack up your traps and come to Alaska and forget her.

DAVID [*hand on his heart*]. She's packed herself here, and here she'll lie snug and warm till all grows cold. [*Looking over to bar*] And that blackguard is talking to her!

COPELAND. Who is he?

DAVID. Sir Brice Skene.

COPELAND. The racing man?

DAVID. Yes. He's rich. George, if he —

COPELAND. If he — what?

DAVID. He shook hands with her last night. When his finger-tips touched hers, I felt I could kill him, George. And if he — if he — No, I wrong her! She's a good woman. And yet, damn him, he has twenty thousand a year —

COPELAND. Is it a question of money?

DAVID. What do you mean?

COPELAND. I've not a single near relation in the world. My father left me, I suppose, from two to three hundred thousand pounds. [*Holds out hand*] Davy, say the word —

DAVID. No, George.

COPELAND. Why should you hesitate?

DAVID. I don't want it. I've just enough for my wants. I've only Eddie to provide for. And I've only one extravagance. [*Tapping the bottle*] I love good wine, and plenty — not too much — of it.

COPELAND. But if you were perhaps she —

DAVID. Thanks, George; buy her.

COPELAND. You're welcome.

DAVID. I know it.

COPELAND. By Jove, I've o time to catch the mail. Go

Davy. [*They stand hand in some moments*] I've left a co thousand at Coutts' in your nam

DAVID. I sha'n't use it.

COPELAND. As you please.

DAVID. How long shall away?

COPELAND. I sha'n't come b I've stood on Mount Saint Elia I do anything for you?

DAVID. Yes. Tell me the of the moonshine on the top.

COPELAND. The same qua your moonshine here, and just a

DAVID. Is anything real? *ing at the fox-hunters and danc* lived so long alone with only that the world has grown quite to me. Look at these ph [*Pointing to the fox-hunters and* Is anything real, George?

COPELAND. Yes; that two t at Coutts'.

DAVID. And friendship. ship is real, isn't it? [*Shakin* God bless you, George. I'll o the station with you.

[*As he is going off* DULCIE from bar, SIR BRICE following her]

DAVID [*sees her*]. No! [*Shake* Don't break your neck over Saint Elias!

COPELAND. Don't break yo over a woman!

DAVID. Yes, I shall. After only playing at life, and so I' my heart over her — in play.

COPELAND. Stick to your su

SIR BRICE [*catching sight of scription list*]. What a confoun of widows and orphans there ar world!

DAVID [*sitting on the other side* Larondie is an orphan.

DULCIE. Yes, or I shouldn't I wonder why all we superfluous were sent into the world!

SIR BRICE [*leaning on the bar* are not superfluous. You ar pensable.

DULCIE. To whom?

BRICE. To me.
 LUCIE [*makes a profound mock*]
 You do me proud. [*Calls to*
] Mr. Remon, can you tell me
 was sent into the world?

DAVID. To be indispensable to Sir
 Skene.

BRICE. [*Aside to DULCIE*] Why
 u talk to that fellow?

LUCIE. [*Aside to SIR BRICE*] Oh,
 uses me. I can make such a fool
 , and — I'm so sick of this.

BRICE. I'll send you my new
 on Friday. Come to the meet.

LUCIE. I daren't. What would
 body say?

BRICE. What does it matter?
 nd you the mare.

LUCIE. No. They'd all cut me.
 l your sister chaperon me? You
 she wouldn't.

BRICE. My dear — you've made
 ful mistake.

LUCIE. Don't call me your dear.
 't have it.

BRICE [*with a little laugh*]. My
 you've made an awful mistake,
 here's only one way out of it.

LUCIE. I don't wish to get out of
 et them laugh at me, and cut me.
 bear it.

BRICE. Don't be a fool. If I
 to offer you — [*In a low voice*]

LUCIE [*stops him*]. No. Pray don't.
 n't take it.

BRICE [*bending nearer to her*].
 I were to offer you —

DAVID. [*To SIR BRICE*] Will you
 ne those matches, please?

BRICE. Take them.

JIMMY STOKES, an old huntsman
 in an old hunting suit]

LUCIE. Oh, Jimmy Jimmy Stokes,
 o glad to see you! How are you,
 y Jimmy Stokes?

JIMMY [*beaming old fellow of about*
 y]. Oh, I'm just tol-lol, miss, for
 l'un. How's yourself, miss?

LUCIE. Oh, this isn't myself,
 y. Myself's dead and buried,
 when I come back to life I shall
 his queer creature has been play-
 ll sorts of mad pranks in my ab-

Sit down, Jimmy Jimmy Stokes,
 ut a name on it.

JIMMY. Well, just a little wee drop
 , miss, if I ain't intruding.

LUCIE. Intruding, Jimmy? You
 to be welcome at any meet of the
 over.

JIMMY. Head whip five-and-thirty
 years, I was. And thinks I, I'll look in
 to-night. So I washes myself up, putts
 on my old whip's coat, and here I be as
 bold as brass. You see, miss, I be a
 privileged party, I be. Thank you,
 miss — Woa, woa, miss — woa!

[SIR BRICE and DAVID have been
 sitting at table, looking at each
 other]

SIR BRICE. You spoke?

DAVID. No.

[The look is continued for some
 moments]

SIR BRICE [*folds his arms over the*
table, leans over them to DAVID]. What
 the devil do you mean?

DAVID [*folds his arms over the table*
so that they meet SIR BRICE's, leans over
them so that the two men's faces almost
touch]. I mean to kill you if you dis-
 honour her.

SIR BRICE. You'll kill me?

DAVID. I'll kill you.

SIR BRICE. I'll have her one way or
 the other.

DAVID. You're warned.

[SIR BRICE rises, goes towards
 DULCIE, is about to speak to her.
 DAVID turns round and looks
 at him. SIR BRICE stops, calls
 out to DULCIE, who is talking
 over the bar to JIMMY STOKES]

SIR BRICE. Miss Larondie, I'll send
 you the mare on Friday.

[DULCIE shakes her head, SIR
 BRICE looks at DAVID and exit]

JIMMY. Well, here's luck to you,
 miss, and I wish I could see you going
 across the country with the C. H. as
 you used — that's all the harm I wish
 you, for you was a sweet, pretty figure
 on horseback, you was, and you rode
 straight, you and your father, wire and
 all — you rode straight.

DULCIE. Don't remind me of old
 times, Jimmy. [*Turns to DAVID mis-*
chievously] Mr. Remon, it's getting
 late. Isn't it time you were going?

DAVID [*rises*]. Good-night.

DULCIE. Good-night. [*As he is*
passing out to door she calls out to him
again] Mr. Remon — [DAVID stops]
 I've something to say to you.

DAVID [*coming to her*]. What is it?

DULCIE [*tapping her forehead impa-*
tiently]. It's gone! Would you mind
 waiting there till I think what it is?

DAVID. Certainly.

DULCIE. That's so good of you.
 [Looks him up and down a little while

mischievously] Can I give you a book while you wait? Here's "Bradshaw," the "Turf Guide," this week's "Sporting Times."

DAVID. I shouldn't understand it. I'll look at you.

DULCIE. Do you understand me?

DAVID. Perfectly.

DULCIE. I don't understand you.

DAVID. You will some day.

[*The dance has finished, and a crowd of young men dancers, FANCOURT, CARTER, RANDALL, RODNEY, SHARLAND, come chattering and laughing to the bar, and shout for drinks together*]

FANCOURT. I say, Miss Larondie, I'm dying for a whisky and soda.

CARTER. Lemon squash.

RANDALL. A baby bottle of jump.

RODNEY. Brandy and soda.

FANCOURT. Don't serve him, Miss Larondie. He's three parts squiffy already.

RODNEY. Shut up, Fan.

SHARLAND. A gin cocktail, Miss Larondie, and I'll show you how to mix it.

FANCOURT. Don't trust him, miss. He wants to sneak a sample of your spirits for the public analyst.

RODNEY. Serve me first, Miss Larondie, and I'll give you a guinea for Dick Ramsden's widow.

[*General hubbub and clatter*]

DULCIE. Order, order, gentlemen! Jimmy Stokes, take this gentleman's guinea and go round with this list, and see what you can get for poor Dick's family.

[*JIMMY takes the subscription list, and is seen to go round with it to several of the bystanders, and talk to them in dumb show*]

FANCOURT. I'll go behind and help you, miss.

[*Lifts up the lid of the counter, and tries to push in*]

RODNEY [*pushing him back*]. Sling, you animal! I'm going to be under-barmaid here.

[*They both push in behind the bar*]

FANCOURT. No, you don't. Now, gents, your orders, and no larking with us poor unprotected females.

[*Putting his arm round DULCIE'S waist*]

[*HELEN LARONDIE enters and stands watching DULCIE*]

DULCIE [*indignantly to FANCOURT*]. How dare you?

RODNEY [*on the other side, arm round her waist—to FANCOURT*]. How dare you?

DULCIE [*disengaging herself hastily*]. PASS out! Do you PASS out! [*Showing them the door*]. SEES HELEN standing there, *shame*! NELL!

FANCOURT [*avises RODNEY by the elbow and runs him out*]. PASS out! PASS out!

[*Runs him out of the door*]

BRINKLER. Gentlemen! Gentlemen! If you please! gentlemen! please!

DULCIE. Mr. Brinkler, my wife comes for me. Would you mind on these gentlemen?

[*They clamour round BRINKLER, repeating their orders for drinks*]

DULCIE goes to her sister.

DULCIE. Nell!

HELEN. My dear.

DULCIE. Come and talk to me.

[*Takes her up to where DAVID is sitting. She catches sight of DAVID, who has been watching the scene with a mixture of bitterness and amusement.*]
DAVID] Mr. Remon—I had a word to say to you.

DAVID. You had such pleasant company.

DULCIE. I have wasted your time.

DAVID. It's of no value.

DULCIE. But I'm afraid I've been a little foolish.

DAVID. In a world of fools distinction to play the fool for. In a world of shadows, what matter what part one plays? It's all night.

DULCIE. No, come again.

DAVID. It's nearly closing time.

DULCIE. But we shall be here to-morrow night. Come again by and by.

DAVID. By and by.

HELEN. Who is that?

DULCIE. His name's Remon. He's haunted the place for twelve months. He's in love with me, and he'll make him do any foolish thing I like. [*BRINKLER serves the young men drinks. The music strikes up again. They gradually go off, leaving DULCIE and HELEN alone.*]
Nell, I'm so glad—what makes you come so late?

HELEN [*a soft-voiced, gentle voice*]. I'm of about thirty, in a nurse's dress. I just had a telegram to go and see a typhoid case at Moorbrow, so I

for a few weeks. You still like
it?

HELEN [rather defiantly]. Yes. It's
better than being a governess, and it's
not so horrid as nursing typhoid.

HELEN [smiling]. Dear, there's nothing
so horrid about nursing. It's just like
her and her baby.

HELEN. How awful sweet that must
be! [Looking at her sister] How pa-
tient you take our comedown, Nell.
Instead of rebelling and hating every-
body as I do, you've just gone and nursed
those dirty people and made your-
self happy over it.

HELEN. I've found out the secret
of it.

HELEN. What's that?

HELEN. Forget yourself. Deny
yourself. Renounce yourself. It's out
of fashion just now. But some-
time the world will hear that message

HELEN [looking at HELEN with ad-
miration]. I wish I was good like you.
No, I don't. I don't want to
myself, or renounce myself, or
deny myself. I want to enjoy myself,
and see life. That's why I scrowed
my courage and answered Brinkler's
proposal, and came here.

HELEN. And are you enjoying your-
self?

HELEN [defiantly]. Yes, after a fashion.
I wish I was a man, or one of those
upstairs. Why should they have
all the pleasure and happiness of life?

HELEN. You're sure they have all
the pleasure and happiness of life?

HELEN. At any rate they've got
what I want. Oh, how I long for life!
I could enjoy it! Hark! [Dance
swells] Isn't that dance mad-
dening? I must dance! [Begins] Oh,
I was made for society! Oh, for
me! for pleasure! To be some-
body in the world! How I would wor-
ship any man who would raise me to a
position! And wouldn't I repay him?

HELEN. I should! I should! I should have
all in at my feet! I could do it! I
could! Oh, is there anybody
who will take me out of this dead-alive
and give me the life I was made for?

[Flings herself wildly round, half
dancing, and drops her head
into HELEN's lap sobbing]

HELEN [stroking DULCIE's hair very
gently]. My poor Dulcie! I know you
aren't happy here.

HELEN. I hate it! I hate it! Nell,

don't be surprised if I do something
desperate before long.

HELEN. Dulcie, you'll do nothing
wrong.

[Lifting up DULCIE's head, look-
ing keenly at her]

DULCIE. What do you mean? Nell,
you know I wouldn't. Kiss me, ducky.
Say you know I wouldn't.

HELEN [kisses her]. I don't think you
would, but — when I came in and saw
those two men —

DULCIE [quickly]. Boys. They
meant nothing. One has to put up
with a good deal here. Men aren't
nice creatures.

HELEN. Dulcie, you must come
away from this.

DULCIE. Where? What can I do?
I wish somebody would marry me.
What wouldn't I give to cut Lady
Clarice as she cut me to-night!

HELEN. Did she cut you?

DULCIE. Yes. She gave me one
look — Nell, if she looks at me again
like that, I don't care what happens, I
shall box her ears.

HELEN. Dulcie!

DULCIE. But if she cuts me, Sir
Brice has cut her. And he pays me
no end of attention.

HELEN. You're not growing friendly
with Sir Brice?

DULCIE. No — yes — he's always
paying me compliments, and asking me
to take presents.

HELEN. You haven't taken his
presents?

DULCIE. No. Don't fear, Nell, I'll
take nothing from him except — if he
were really fond of me, I'd marry him,
Nell.

HELEN. No, dear no. He's not a
good man.

DULCIE. Nell, there ain't any good
men left in the world. The race is
extinct. I dare say Sir Brice is as good
as the rest, and if he were to ask me I
should say "yes." [HELEN shakes her
head] Yes, I should, Nell. And I
should make him a good wife, Nell, for
there are the makings of a good wife
in me. I should say "yes," and oh,
wouldn't I like to see Lady Clarice's
face when she hears the news.

HELEN. I hope he won't ask you,
Dulcie.

DULCIE. Stranger things have hap-
pened.

HELEN. I must be going. I've to
watch a fever case to-night.

DULCIE [*twining HELEN's arms round her neck*]. I wish I could have a fever.

HELEN. Dulcie!

DULCIE. It would be so lovely to be nursed by you. [*Hugging her*] I shall never love a man as I love you, Nell. But I suppose that's a different kind of love. [*HELEN sighs*] What makes you sigh?

HELEN. Good-bye, Dulcie.

DULCIE. Good-bye, you dear, nice, soft, warm, comforting thing. You're as good as a boa, or a muff, or a poultice to me. I'll let you out this way. It's nearer for you.

[*Exeunt HELEN and DULCIE through bar*]

[*SIR BRICE enters from ball-room, followed by LADY CRANDOVER, LADY CLARICE following. LADY CLARICE goes and sits down quite apart*]

LADY CRANDOVER. Sir Brice! [*SIR BRICE turns, stops. LADY CRANDOVER somewhat embarrassed*]. Do you know what people are saying of you?

SIR BRICE. I haven't an idea. But whatever it is, don't stop them.

LADY CRANDOVER. Sir Brice. All through the season you have paid the most marked attention to Clarice.

SIR BRICE. I admire Lady Clarice immensely. I have a very ingenuous nature, and perhaps I allowed it to become too apparent.

LADY CRANDOVER. You allowed it to become so apparent that every one in the county supposed as an honourable man —

SIR BRICE. Ah, that's a nice point, isn't it? If Crandover thinks I have behaved dishonourably, the Englishman's three remedies are open to him — he can write a letter to the "Times," or he can bring an action, or — he can horsewhip me. Personally, I'm indifferent which course he takes. Excuse me. [*Goes off into the bar*]

LADY CRANDOVER [*enraged and almost in tears, goes to CLARICE*]. My dear, he's a brute! What an awful life his wife will have!

LADY CLARICE. Then why did you run after him? Why did you let me encourage him?

LADY CRANDOVER. Clarice, he has twenty thousand a year.

LADY CLARICE. But everybody says he'll run through it in a few years. He

lost fifty thousand on the Leg alone.

LADY CRANDOVER. I know. Oh yes, he'll soon get through it. Well, now you've lost him, it's a great comfort to think what a perfect brute he is. You had a lucky escape.

[*DULCIE re-enters from bar. JIMMY enters with subscription list*]

LADY CLARICE [*watching DULCIE*]. Yes, but I don't like being thrown aside for that miss there.

DULCIE. What luck, Jimmy? [*JIMMY shakes his head. DULCIE takes the subscription list from him*] Oh, Jimmy Stokes, when we keep a Pun and Judy show, I'll never send you round with the hat.

JIMMY. Ah, miss, we know how you could get a peck of money for 'em, don't we, Mr. Fancourt?

FANCOURT. By Jove, yes. Jimmy has made a splendid suggestion, Mr. Larondie. The only question is, will you agree to it?

DULCIE. What is it, Jimmy?

JIMMY. You back me up, miss, that's all, will you?

DULCIE. Certainly. Anything to keep Mrs. Ramsden and her chick-biddies out of the workhouse. I always feel, you know, Jimmy, that it was through me that Dick was killed.

FANCOURT. Through you, Miss Larondie?

DULCIE. I was leading across Drury hill. I took the drop into the road. Dick was next behind. His horse stumbled and [*shudders*] they picked him up dead.

[*All the young fellows have crowded around and listen*]

JIMMY. 'Twas me as picked him up if you remember, miss, and took him home, I did, ah, it's three years ago, last February, yes, and I broke the news to his wife, I did, and what more, I helped to lay Dick out, I did, and I says to his wife, "Don't take any more, you foolish woman," I says "why," I says, "it might have been a felo-de-se." But it were a nasty drop jump, miss, a nasty drop jump.

DULCIE. And if I hadn't taken perhaps Dick might have been alive now.

JIMMY. Not he, not he. Dick have drunk himself to death before then. He was a royal soul, Dick was. And you'll only back me up, we'll raise

the fortune for Mrs. Ramsden in no time.

DULCIE. Very well, Jimmy. But what is this plan, eh, Mr. Fancourt?

FANCOURT. Tell her, Jimmy. You started it.

JIMMY. Well, miss, seeing all these young gents here, it struck me as, a man nature being what it is, and no coming over it, no offence I hope to anybody, but if you was to offer to sell on my mind you, only one, of your kisses at the highest bidder —

DULCIE [*indignantly*]. What?

MONTY. A very excellent and original suggestion!

DULCIE. The idea! What nonsense!

FANCOURT. Nonsense? I call it a very good idea.

SHARLAND. Splendid! By Jove, we'll try it out too.

DULCIE. Indeed we won't. Jimmy, tell me that list. [*Takes the subscription list from JIMMY*] Mr. Fancourt will tell me something, I'm sure.

FANCOURT. I should be delighted, [*nudging SHARLAND*] fact is, I've promised Sharland I wouldn't give anything except on the conditions Jimmy Stokes has just laid down.

DULCIE. Mr. Sharland.

SHARLAND. Very sorry, Miss Larondie, but fact is [*nudging FANCOURT*] I've promised Fancourt I wouldn't give anything except on the conditions Jimmy Stokes has laid down.

[*Dulcie turns away indignantly, sees LADY CRANDOVER and LADY CLARICE, hesitates a moment, then goes somewhat defiantly to them*]

DULCIE. Lady Crandover, may I beg you for a small subscription to Dick Ramsden's widow and children?

LADY CRANDOVER [*very coolly*]. I always leave such things to Lord Crandover. [*Turns away*]

DULCIE. Perhaps Lady Clarice —

LADY CRANDOVER. I thought I heard one of you propose a way in which you could raise some money.

SIR BRICE [*coming from bar*]. Raise some money? What's the matter here?

FANCOURT. Jimmy Stokes has just proposed that Miss Larondie should benefit the Dick Ramsden fund by selling a kiss by auction.

SIR BRICE. What does Miss Larondie say?

DULCIE. Impossible!

MONTY. Not in the least. If you will allow me, gentlemen, I will constitute myself auctioneer. [*To DULCIE*] I beg you will place yourself entirely in my hands, Miss Larondie. Trust to my tact to bring this affair to a most successful issue. After all, it's not so indelicate as slumming.

DULCIE. No, no!

MONTY. Allow me. A rostrum. Rodney, you are my clerk. That wine case. [*A wine case is brought forward from side*] And that barrel, if please. A hammer. [*A large mallet, such as is used for hammering bungs in beer barrels is given to him*]. Thank you. [*He mounts*] Ladies and gentlemen. [*Chorus of "Hear, hear"*] We must all admit that the methods of raising the wind for all sorts of worthless persons and useless charities stand in need of entire revision. Fancy fairs, amateur theatricals, tableaux vivants, and such grotesque utilities have had their day. In the interests of those long-suffering persons who get up charity entertainments, and those yet more long-suffering persons who attend them, it is high time to inaugurate a new departure. [*Cries of "Hear, hear"*] Ladies and gentlemen, there are three questions I take it which we ask ourselves when we raise a charitable subscription. Firstly, how shall we advertise ourselves, or amuse ourselves, as the case may be? Secondly, how far shall we be able to fleece our friends and the public? Thirdly, is the charity a deserving one? — The only really vital question of the three is "How shall we amuse ourselves in the sacred cause of charity?"

[*Cries of "Hear, hear"*]

LADY CRANDOVER. Lushington, stop this nonsense before it goes any further! Do you hear?

MONTY. Ladies and gentlemen, I am in your hands. Shall I go on?

[*Loud cries of "Yes, yes — Go on, — Go on, Monty — Go on, Lushington"*]

LADY CRANDOVER. [*To LADY CLARICE*] Now she'll disgrace herself.

SIR BRICE [*having overheard*]. What did you say, Lady Crandover?

LADY CRANDOVER. Nothing, Sir Brice.

SIR BRICE. I understood you to say that Miss Larondie would disgrace herself.

DULCIE [*with shame*]. Oh, Sir Brice, please let me go!

[DAVID REMON enters. DULCIE going off comes face to face with him — stops]

SIR BRICE. No, stay. Don't take any notice of what has been said.

DAVID. What has been said?

SIR BRICE. What business is it of yours? Miss Larondie is a connection of my family. Go on, Lushington — Go on. We'll have this auction — it's in the cause of charity, isn't it? Go on!

DAVID. [To MONTAGU] What auction? What charity?

MONTY [soothingly]. Gentlemen, gentlemen, we are taking this far too seriously. Pray be calm and allow me to proceed. [Cries of "Hear! — Go on, Monty!"] In an age when, as all good moralists lament, love is so often brought into the market, the marriage market — and other markets — and is sold to the highest bidder, it would, I am convinced, require a far more alarming outrage on propriety than that which we are now about to commit, to cause the now obsolete and unfashionable blush of shame to mount into the now obsolete and unfashionable cheek of modesty. Gentlemen, without further ado I offer for your competition — one kiss from Miss Larondie. [Movement on the part of DAVID. SIR BRICE and he stand confronting each other] One kiss from Miss Larondie. What shall I say, gentlemen?

FANCOURT. A sovereign.

MONTY. A sovereign is offered. I will on my own account advance ten shillings. Thirty shillings is offered, gentlemen.

SHARLAND. Thirty-five shillings.

MONTY. I cannot take an advance of less than ten shillings on this lot. Shall I say two pounds?

[SHARLAND nods]

SIR BRICE. A fiver.

[DAVID steps forward towards SIR BRICE]

MONTY. Thank you. A fiver. You are trifling, gentlemen.

FANCOURT. Six.

MONTY. Six guineas — guineas only. Six guineas is offered. Gentlemen, if you do not bid up, in justice to my client I must withdraw the lot.

SHARLAND. Seven.

SIR BRICE. Ten.

MONTY. Ten guineas. Gentlemen, only ten guineas — only ten guineas for this rare and genuine, this highly desirable —

DAVID. Twenty guineas.

MONTY. Twenty guineas. you, sir. This gentleman sells quality of the article I am selling —

SIR BRICE. Thirty.

MONTY. Thirty guineas. men, is the age of chivalry dead. Fancourt, you are credited with small amount of prowess among less ladies —

SHARLAND. Cut in, Fan.

FANCOURT. Thirty-one.

MONTY. Cannot take advance than five guineas. Thirty-five guineas. Gentlemen, will you force me to patiate further on this exquisite?

DAVID. Forty.

SIR BRICE. Fifty.

[DAVID and SIR BRICE are nearer to each other]

LORD CRANDOVER. Lushington is enough. This is getting beyond.

MONTY. Then it's the only in life that ever did, so we'll close. Bid up, gentlemen, bid up. I assure, gentlemen, by my client's vendor, that on no account will the lot ever be duplicated. I am therefore offering you a unique opportunity of purchasing what I will venture to scribe as the most —

DAVID. Sixty.

SIR BRICE. Seventy.

LORD CRANDOVER. Enough — Stop this jest.

MONTY. Jest? I presume you in earnest, gentlemen, about the chase of this lot?

DAVID. I am.

SIR BRICE. Go on, go on.

MONTY. Seventy guineas, gentlemen. Guineas. Gentlemen, you have done? Mr. Fancourt, faint heart?

SHARLAND. Have another shot.

FANCOURT. Seventy-five.

MONTY. Seventy-five. Going seventy-five guineas — the only one going at seventy-five guineas.

FANCOURT. I say, Bricey, do me in.

SIR BRICE. Eighty.

[Looking at DAVID.]

DAVID. Ninety.

SIR BRICE. A hundred.

[Getting close to DAVID.]

DAVID. Two hundred.

SIR BRICE. Three hundred.

LORD CRANDOVER. Skene, away, do you hear? Come away.

[Trying to drag SIR BRICE]

BRICE. Let me be. What's the dding, Lushington?

NTY. Three hundred guineas.

BRICE. Five.

ID. A thousand.

BRICE. Fifteen hundred.

ID. Two thousand.

BRICE. Three, and [growling] be d to you! [Pause] Knock it Lushington.

[Long pause. DAVID shows disappointment]

NTY. Three thousand guineas is l, gentlemen. [Pause] No further Going at three thousand. Going,

[Knocks it down] Sir Brice, the yours at three thousand guineas.

BRICE. Brinkler, pens, ink, and and a stamp. [Stepping towards DAVID comes to him] You've no r business here.

ID. Yes, I think.

[Pens, ink, and paper are brought to SIR BRICE; he hastily dashes off the cheque, gives it to MONTAGU]

NTY. Thank you. Miss Laronsheque for three thousand guineas. ave secured an annuity for your es.

IE [refusing the cheque]. No.

BRICE. Miss Larondie. [DAVID t him] It will perhaps save any r misconstruction if I tell these and gentlemen that an hour ago d you to do me the honour to e my wife. [General surprise]

IE. Sir Brice —

BRICE. Will you do me the e to take that cheque for your y, and the further favour of be- g Lady Skene?

[MONTAGU offers the cheque. A pause. DULCIE looks round, looks at LADY CLARICE, takes the cheque]

IE. Thank you, Sir Brice. I e very proud.

[DAVID shows quiet despair. Goes to back. Half the guests crowd round SIR BRICE and DULCIE, congratulating. The others show surprise, interest, and amazement]

r CRANDOVER [in a very loud My carriage at once.

b CRANDOVER [in a low voice to We'd better stay and make the it..

CRANDOVER. No, my carriage. Clarice.

[Goes off. A good many of the guests follow her]

[Exeunt LADY CLARICE and LORD CRANDOVER]

SIR BRICE. [To FANCOURT] The Crandovers have gone off in a huff. Bet you a tenner they'll dine with me before three months.

FANCOURT. Done!

SIR BRICE. [To DULCIE] If you will allow me, I will place you in my sister's care. She's in the ball-room.

DULCIE [looking at her dress]. No, Sir Brice, not yet. I've one of my old evening dresses upstairs. May I put it on?

SIR BRICE. Yes, if you like. I'll wait for you at the ball-room door.

DULCIE. I won't be a moment.

[Running off upstairs with great excitement and delight]

MONTY. [To SIR BRICE] Congratulate you heartily, Sir Brice.

[Offering hand]

SIR BRICE [taking it]. Oh, I suppose it's all right.

SHARLAND. [To SIR BRICE] Your wooing was charmingly fresh and original, Sir Brice.

SIR BRICE. Think so?

CHARLEY. [To MONTY] What on earth does he want to marry the girl for?

MONTY. Somebody has bet him a guinea he wouldn't.

[Exeunt CHARLEY and MONTAGU into the ball-room]

FANCOURT. Bravo, Bricey, my boy! This'll make up to you for losing the Leger.

SIR BRICE. Think so? I'll go and get a smoke outside. [Exit at gates]

SHARLAND. [To FANCOURT] Just like Bricey to do a silly fool's trick like this.

FANCOURT. I pity the girl. Bricey will make a sweet thing in husbands.

SHARLAND. By Jove, yes. Her life'll be a regular beno, and no mistake.

[Exeunt. DAVID is left alone sitting at back]

[Enter EDDIE. DAVID drinks and laughs rather bitterly to himself]

EDDIE. What's gone wrong, Davy?

DAVID. Miss Larondie is going to marry Sir Brice Skene.

EDDIE. Oh, then the solar system is all out of joint! Poor old big brother!

DAVID. I won't feel it, Eddie, I won't feel it.

EDDIE. Yes, you will, Davy. Yes, you will. Why weren't you tumbled into Mars, or Jupiter, or Saturn, or into any world but this?

DAVID. Why?

EDDIE. This is the very worst world that ever spun round, for a man who has a heart. Look at all the heartless and stupid people; what a paradise this is for them!

DAVID. I'll forget her and plunge into my work. There are millions of new worlds to discover.

EDDIE. Yes, but are they all like this? because if they are, what's the use of discovering millions more of them? Oh, Davy, isn't there one perfect world out of all the millions — just one — where everything goes right, and fiddles never play out of tune?

DAVID. There isn't one, Eddie, not one of all the millions. They're all alike.

EDDIE. And breaking hearts in all of them? Oh, let's pretend there's just one perfect star somewhere, shall we?

DAVID. Oh, very well; let's pretend there's one in the nebula of Andromeda. It's a long way off, and it does no harm to pretend. Besides, it makes the imbroglia of the universe complete if there is one perfect world somewhere in it.

[SIR BRICE enters smoking, throws away his cigarette, looks at DAVID rather insolently, goes into the ball-room]

DAVID. If he doesn't treat her well — what does it matter? It's all a farce, but if he doesn't treat her well, I feel, Eddie, I could put a murder into the farce, just for fun.

EDDIE. Come home, Davy.

DAVID. Let me be, my boy. It's only a pinprick. I shall get over it.

EDDIE. I wish I could bear it for you, Davy.

DAVID. That would only mean your heart breaking instead of mine.

EDDIE. Don't you think I'd break my heart for you, Davy?

DULCIE [her voice heard off]. Thanks! I can't wait! Sir Brice is waiting for me!

EDDIE. Poor old big brother!

[Exit]

[Enter DULCIE down the stairs in evening dress, excited, radiant]

DULCIE [seeing DAVID]. I thought you'd gone. Did you hear? I'm to be Lady Skene. Do I look nice?

[Very excited] I beg your pardon, I don't know what I'm saying. round! I wish there was a glass here. I wonder where Sir Brice is — I'm to be Lady Skene — you congratulate me?

DAVID. I hope you will be happy.

DULCIE. No, congratulate me.

DAVID. I hope you will be happy.

DULCIE. Ah, you think I shall be happy? Then I will, just to spite you.

DAVID. Ah, do spite me, be happy.

DULCIE [fidgeting with her dress]. I'm sure my dress isn't right. Wasn't that a jest about the kiss?

DAVID. A great jest.

DULCIE. You wouldn't have given two thousand guineas for a kiss from me?

DAVID [nods]. Why not? Sir Brice gave fifty thousand for the chance of losing the Leger.

DULCIE. But he stood to win.

DAVID. So did I.

DULCIE. What?

DAVID. The kiss.

DULCIE. But you wouldn't have given two thousand guineas for a kiss from me?

DAVID [nods]. I think highly of women. It's a pleasing delusion. Don't disturb it.

DULCIE [looking at him, after a pause]. You are the strangest creature I ever met, but what a splendid friend you'd be! I'm keeping Sir Brice waiting. round, sees that the lace on the skirt of her dress is hanging loose! Look at that lace! What can I do? [Gives him the pin] Would you mind pinning that lace on my skirt?

DAVID [takes the pin, kneels, and pins the lace, unseen by DULCIE, kisses her skirt] Will that do?

DULCIE. Thank you so much. I look nice?

[He looks up at her impatiently, like a dumb creature; she turns swiftly round to see that they are alone, suddenly bestows kisses on him; runs up the stairs. A burst of music]

[Three years and a half pass
Acts I and II]

ACT II

E. — Reception-room at LADY SKENE'S. A great crowd in farther room. Discover LADY CRANDOVER, LADY CLARICE, CHARLEY VISHANGER [now LADY SHALFORD], MONTAGU, FANCOURT, SHARLAND, and the young men of the first Act. Among the guests in farther room SIR WINCHMORE WILLS and the HON. PERCY BLANCHFLOWER.

BY CRANDOVER. It's astounding. CHARLEY. What is?

BY CRANDOVER. The way every one acts after this woman. She's got everybody here again to-night.

BY CLARICE. Professor Rawkin and the Bishop of Malmesbury were here to get her an ice.

CHARLEY. What is the secret of her popularity?

NTY. Why did you come here to-night?

CHARLEY. I? Oh, I came because everybody else comes. Why did you?

NTY. Because everybody else does. Do we ever have any other reason for going anywhere, admiring anything, saying anything, or doing anything? The secret of getting a lady to your room is, "*Entice a bell-wether*." The flock will follow.

CHARLEY. Who was bell-wether to Lady Skene?

NTY. The old Duchess of Nor-

BY CRANDOVER. I suppose the Duchess knows all about Lady Skene's antecedents?

NTY. What does it matter about a lady's antecedents to-day?

BY CRANDOVER. We must draw the line somewhere.

NTY. On the contrary, my dear Crandover, we must not draw the line anywhere. We have yet got to find out what democracy means.

BY CLARICE. What does democracy mean?

NTY. That there is no line to be drawn, either socially, morally, politically, religiously, or otherwise.

BY CLARICE. How horrid!

NTY [continuing]. Who are the leading people here to-night? Of course there's a crowd of respectable people — But who are the attrac-

Attraction number one: a

financier's wife — the most charming woman in the world — gives the very best dinners in London — had an extensive acquaintance amongst the officers at Aldershot fifteen years ago.

[THE HON. PERCY BLANCHFLOWER, a fussy, buzzy, mincing, satirical little creature, with a finicking, feminine manner and gestures, has overheard, comes up to the group]

BLANCHFLOWER. What's this? — eh? — hum? No scandal, I trust?

MONTY. No, Blanchflower; no scandal — only the plain, unvarnished truth about all our friends.

BLANCHFLOWER. Ah, then I'll stay and listen. Go on!

MONTY. Attraction number two: leading temperance and social purity orator — can move an audience of ten thousand to tears — leads the loosest of lives — and is suspected of having poisoned his wife.

BLANCHFLOWER. But she had a fearful cockney accent. And he's very kind to his aged aunt and pretty niece — eh? — hum? Give him his due.

MONTY. My dear Blanchflower, I'm not blaming the man for poisoning his wife. It may have been a necessity of his position; and if she had a cockney accent, it was a noble thing to do. Attraction number three: pretty little lady who has just emerged triumphantly from the Divorce Court, without a spot upon her pretty little character. Attraction number four —

[LADY CLARICE rejoins the group]

BLANCHFLOWER [interrupting]. No! No! Skip number four! We know all about her. Attraction number five. And mind, I shall thoroughly scold you all — when Lushington has got through his list.

MONTY [proceeding]. Attraction number five: impressionist artist, novelist, and general dirty modern dabbler — is consummately clever — a consistent scoundrel in every relation of life — especially to women — a liar, a cheat, and drunkard — and a great personal friend of my own.

BLANCHFLOWER. Oh, this is too shocking! This is really too shocking!

LADY CLARICE. You've omitted the chief attraction to-night — our famous astronomer.

MONTY. Remon?

BLANCHFLOWER. Of course. Since

his great discovery we've only one astronomer in England.

CHARLEY. What was his great discovery?

BLANCHFLOWER. Don't know. Some new spots on Venus, I believe.

MONTY. No. That she wanted a new belt to hide the manners of her inhabitants, which were distinctly visible through his new large telescope, and if constantly observed would tend to the corruption of London society.

BLANCHFLOWER. You naughty person! You're not to look through that telescope!

MONTY. My dear Blanchflower, I have; and I assure you we have nothing to fear. But I tremble for the morals of Venus if they get a telescope as large as Remon's and begin to look at us.

BLANCHFLOWER. Tell me, this friendship of the astronomer with Lady Skene — eh? hum? — quite innocent — eh?

MONTY. I have never known any friendship between a man and a married woman that was not innocent. How can it be guilty, unless the woman is ugly?

LADY CLARICE. Poor dear Lady Skene is fearfully ill-used, I hear. [SIR WINCHMORE WILLS, a fashionable middle-aged physician, has come up and joined the group] I've heard that Sir Brice gets drunk and — then — dreadful things happen.

BLANCHFLOWER. But that can't be true — eh? hum? — Sir Winchmore — eh?

SIR WINCHMORE. I have never treated Sir Brice for alcoholism, nor Lady Skene for bruises.

BLANCHFLOWER. No, of course, no — but you've heard — hum? eh?

SIR WINCHMORE. Singularly enough, I have never heard or seen anything in the least discreditable to any one of my patients.

[EDDIE enters and talks to guests]

CHARLEY. I know for a fact Sir Brice came a terrific cropper last week at Epsom, and doesn't know how he stands.

[EDDIE is listening attentively]

BLANCHFLOWER. And — hum — the astronomer — hum? eh? hum? — is there any truth — eh?

MONTY. Well, we know that our astronomer succeeded a few months ago to an immense fortune left him by a mountaineering friend in Canada.

We know that Sir Brice neglects wife and is practically ruined. We know that Lady Skene continues parties, her household, her carriage and we know that our astronomer [Pause] the greatest attentions to Lady Skene. Of course this doesn't actually prove Lady Skene's guilt — why should we deprive ourselves of pleasure of believing and circulating spicy story about our friends merely because there is only the very slight foundation for it?

[EDDIE rises rather indignantly comes a little nearer to the group without being noticed by them]

BLANCHFLOWER. Oh, this is naughty of us. We are actually doing scandal about our hostess. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves!

LADY CRANDOVER. Really, it's terrible if somebody made a stand, or society be ruined. Here is a woman who actually a barmaid at a public-house, her name is in everybody's mouth in connection with this astronomer, yet —

MONTY. And yet we crush to our receptions. At least you do, Lady Crandover.

LADY CRANDOVER. Oh, we are to blame for lowering the moral tone of society as we are doing.

BLANCHFLOWER. Oh, my dear Lady Crandover, please, please, please, not make things unpleasant by dwelling in morality. But where is the astronomer? — eh? hum?

EDDIE. My brother will be coming and by. I'll tell him he's wanted here.

[Exit. BLANCHFLOWER looks aghast and stares round at the rest, who show some slight discomfiture. FANCOURT and SHARLAND join the group]

BLANCHFLOWER. Dear me! That the astronomer's brother. Have you said anything? — hum? eh?

MONTY. My dear Blanchflower, what does it matter what lies we say about each other when none of our friends think any the worse of us if they are true!

BLANCHFLOWER. Oh, but it's very wrong to tell lies, very wrong indeed. I've not seen Sir Brice to-night. What is he? eh?

FANCOURT. Bricey doesn't generally stay very long at his wife's receptions. SHARLAND. Bricey's latest li-

y is teaching the girls at the Theatre to box.

NCOURT. Yes. Last Tuesday he in great force at the Ducks and es Club egging on Betty Vignette ht Sylvia Vernon.

ARLAND. Oh, that's coming off — hundred a side, on Sunday night

NCOURT [*cautiously winking at ARLAND, in a warning way*]. I say, chap, keep it quiet. I wonder e Bricey is to-night.

ONTY. What does it matter her he is playing baccarat with pot-boy at the corner, or clandest-y taking his nurse-girl to the mbra on the pretence that it is issionary meeting? We may be o sure that Bricey is doing some- equally vicious, stupid, disrepu-, and — original.

ARLEY. [*To MONTY*] Come here, monster. Have you heard the

[*During the conversation of CHARLEY and MONTY the other group put their heads together and whisper*]

ONTY. What?

ARLEY. Sir Joseph is going to the Marchmoore estates to Clarice. MONTY [*glancing at LADY CLARICE*].

ARLEY. Fact. The will is to be ed in a few days. Clarice told me confidence.

ONTY. Thanks.

[*Strolls cautiously up to LADY CLARICE, hovers about her till he gets a chance of speaking to her. A general laugh from the group*]

BLANCHFLOWER [*who has been in e of group*]. Oh, this is very shock- We are actually talking scandal t our host. And he has his good s. He hasn't strangled his baby, ie, Sir Winchmore?

r WINCHMORE. Sir Brice has the est consideration for the welfare is offspring. [DULCIE comes from room magnificently dressed, restless, nervous, excited] He never goes it.

[*An awkward little pause as they see DULCIE. LADY CLARICE goes up to her*]

Y CLARICE. What a lot of in- ing folks you always have, dear. is that lady in pale blue?

DULCIE. Mrs. Chalmers.

LADY CLARICE. The lady who has figured so much in the newspapers lately? What a singular gift you have of attracting all sorts of people, dear.

DULCIE. Have I? That's sometimes a misfortune.

LADY CLARICE. Yes, it does involve one in undesirable acquaintances and relationships.

DULCIE. Still it must be rather annoying to be without it.

[*Goes restlessly to SIR WINCHMORE.*]

LADY CLARICE shows slight mortification. MONTY, who has been watching the scene, goes up to her]

MONTY. Lady Clarice, let me give you some supper.

DULCIE [*taking SIR WINCHMORE a little aside*]. Sir Winchmore — so kind of you to come. [*In a half whisper*] That sleeping draught's no use — you must send me a stronger one.

SIR WINCHMORE [*shakes his head*]. Lady Skene —

DULCIE [*impetuously*]. Yes, yes, please — I must have it — I've not slept for three nights.

SIR WINCHMORE. Lady Skene, let me beg you —

DULCIE. No, no, no, — you must patch me up and keep me going somehow till the end of the season, then you shall do what you like with me.

SIR WINCHMORE. But, Lady Skene

DULCIE [*intense suppressed nervousness*]. But — [*Imploringly*] Oh, don't contradict me. — When any one speaks to me I feel I must shriek out "Yah, yah, yah!" [BLANCHFLOWER has overheard the last speech. DULCIE sees that BLANCHFLOWER is looking at her, controls herself after an immense effort, puts on society smile. To BLANCHFLOWER] The Bishop was talking to me just now about his mission to convert the West End of London, and I could scarcely keep from shrieking out to him "Yah, yah, yah!" Isn't it strange?

BLANCHFLOWER. Not at all. Clergymen always produce that effect upon me.

DULCIE [*turning to SIR WINCHMORE*]. Sir Winchmore, you'll run up to the nursery and see Rosy before you go, won't you?

SIR WINCHMORE. What's the matter?

DULCIE. Nothing, only a little tumble and a bruise. My sister Nell is with her, but you'll just see her?

SIR WINCHMORE. Certainly.

DULCIE. I'm so foolish about her. [*Implovingly*] She is strong and healthy, isn't she?

SIR WINCHMORE. A magnificent child.

[*SIR BRICE has entered through other room. He looks coarser and more dissipated than in first Act, and is more brutalised. There is a slight movement of all the guests away from him. SHARLAND enters*]

DULCIE [*not seeing SIR BRICE. To SIR WINCHMORE*]. Really? Really?

SIR WINCHMORE. Really. Sir Brice and you may well be proud of her.

[*SIR BRICE's entrance has caused an awkward pause amongst the guests*]

SIR WINCHMORE. We were talking of your youthful daughter, Sir Brice.

SIR BRICE. I hate brats.

[*Another awkward pause*]

DULCIE [*to cover it, rattles away with forced gaiety*]. We shall see you at Ascot, of course, Mr. Blanchflower. — Sir Winchmore, what are these frightful new waters that you are sending all your patients to? — That reminds me, Lady Shalford, how is Sir Digby's gout?

[*Slight continued movement of the guests away from SIR BRICE*]

CHARLEY. Terrible. I pack him off to Aix on Thursday.

DULCIE [*same tone*]. So sorry he couldn't come to-night.

CHARLEY. My dear, I'm very glad, and so I'm sure is everybody who knows him. If Aix doesn't cure him, I shall try something drastic.

SIR BRICE. Serve him as I did my trainer Burstow.

DULCIE [*noticing the guests' repulsion, slightly frowns at SIR BRICE unobserved by the guests, and goes on speaking to change the subject*]. We shall go to Homburg again —

SIR BRICE [*speaks her down. To CHARLEY*]. Burstow had the gout. I treated him myself. [*Coarse little chuckle*] I gave him a bottle of port, champagne at intervals, and brown brandy *ad lib*. A tombstone now marks Burstow's precise position, which is longitudinal. I wrote his epitaph, but

the vicar wouldn't pass it. vicar and I have a law-suit on.

[*Another coarse little Another awkward little*]

DULCIE [*to cover it, continues*]. Fancourt, did you make about the house-boat for us?

SIR BRICE. We sha'n't go to

DULCIE. [*To FANCOURT*] course you needn't make inquiry

FANCOURT. But I've arranged. My brother will be awfully delighted. You'll accept the loan of his Henley week. You and Sir Brice be awfully pleased with it.

SIR BRICE [*more decidedly*]. not go to Henley.

DULCIE [*another covered frown*]. BRICE, again controlling herself with immense effort and speaking very gently. Will you thank your brother for us? We shall not be going.

[*Awkward pause. SIR BRICE looks at his hands in his pocket, yawns. DULCIE engages a group in conversation, crowd round her*]

SIR BRICE. Percy, come and play a little game of poker in the study room.

SHARLAND. Very sorry, I haven't so much as a fiver with me.

SIR BRICE. You can borrow from me, you borrow, eh?

SHARLAND. Very sorry, I don't have a chap; never borrow or lend.

[*Exit. SIR BRICE starts, yawns, looks sulky and then calls out*]

SIR BRICE. Fancourt. [*Fancourt glances but does not come*]. FANCOURT. I say — [*At length FANCOURT enters*]. We're getting up a little hand of cards just to wind up this infernal evening.

FANCOURT [*shakes his head and looks at his watch*]. Not good enough, Bricey — not good enough.

[*REMON enters. At his entrance the guests show marked interest, and then the conversation stops. SIR BRICE looks at REMON with a sulky expression. REMON shows great pleasure, goes to the door*]

DULCIE. I'm so glad you've come. You have so many engagements.

DAVID. None more pleasing to me. [*Shakes hands*]. this.

FLOWER. I insist on know-
Remon — somebody introduce
roduce me.

Mr. Remon — Mr. Percy
wer.

FLOWER. I'm so delighted
you. We want to look at
rough that large telescope of

It's in the South of France.

FLOWER. I go there every
We were talking about your
discoveries — hum? eh? We
now all about them.

Oh, spare me, or rather,
s. [SIR BRICE laughs]

URT. You seem to have got
g good all to yourself, Bricey.

ICE. Yes, I have. [Laughs]

FLOWER. [Aside, to SIR WINCH-
What is Remon's discovery?

NCHMORE. Haven't the least
something about Saturn, I fancy.

FLOWER [buzzes up to REMON].

discovery now — about Sat-
it — hum? eh?

l through DAVID's conversation
with the guests, he adopts the
same light, frivolous tone through-
out, and speaks without the
least suggestion of seriousness.
This gives a contrast to the
scenes with DULCIE]

[amused, very light and chaffing
about Saturn? Oh yes. My
e is that bad folks when they
nt to Saturn to study current
and if at the end of five hun-
s they know anything about
robation is complete.

neral laugh. DAVID turns to
group. SIR BRICE laughs]

URT. What is it, Bricey?

ICE. Lady Skene is making a
uss with all of you to-night.
ke a howling fuss of another
t week. I can't stand that
er fellow.

FLOWER. But do tell us,
ne, what is Mr. Remon's great
— hum? eh?

I believe Mr. Remon has
great deal of time to the study
ts.

FLOWER. Oh — ah, yes —
ow [to DAVID] what is the
unction of sun-spots — hum?
at do they do?

[still amused, chaffing, mysteri-
e long had a suspicion that

there is a very subtle connection be-
tween sun-spots and politics — in fact,
I am convinced that the present de-
cadence of political manners and morals
is entirely caused by the persistence of
a certain sun-spot. As soon as we can
remove it, the natural ingrained hon-
esty and patriotism of our politicians
will reassert themselves.

[General laugh]

SIR BRICE [pushes a little forward with
a rather insolent manner to DAVID]. My
character is always puzzling me. Can
you tell me whether its present develop-
ment is due to sun-spots?

DAVID [is about to reply rather an-
grily, is checked by a look from DULCIE,
speaks very politely]. You might not
think me polite, Sir Brice.

SIR BRICE [persisting]. I should like
to have a scientific examination made
of my character.

DAVID [still controlling himself]. I
fear I should not make a sympathetic
operator.

SIR BRICE [still persisting]. But —

DULCIE [who has been watching very
apprehensively, to SIR BRICE]. My
dear, Lady Franklin wants to ask you
something about a horse for Ascot.
She was here a moment ago: [Looking
around, drawing SIR BRICE away from
the group, who close up round REMON.
DULCIE is getting SIR BRICE away] For
God's sake keep away from us! [A
guest is just passing, DULCIE turns to her
with a forced society smile and manner]
How do you do? What a sweet frock!

[Shakes hands with guest, who
passes on]

SIR BRICE [sulkily]. What's the
matter? [Approaching her]

DULCIE. Don't go near any one.
You smell of brandy.

[All this under breath with great
terror and apprehension]

SIR BRICE [getting a little nearer her].
I rather like the smell of brandy.

DULCIE [terrified, under breath]. Keep
away — keep away — if you come
a step nearer to me I shall shriek
out before everybody. You nearly
drove me out of my mind this morning.
Oh, for Heaven's sake — do go — do
go!

SIR BRICE. Well, as it's infernally
slow here I will go — but — you may
as well know, there will be no Ascot,
no Henley, no Goodwood, no Homburg,
no anything. We shall be sold up
within a month. [DULCIE is staggering

for a moment]. Ta ta! — my blessing — I'm going to the Club.

[Exit. DULCIE stands overwhelmed for a moment, tries to pull herself together, staggers a little. DAVID, who has been watching her and SIR BRICE, leaves the group and comes to her, speaks with great feeling, very softly, his tone and manner to her in great contrast to his tone and manner with the guests]

DAVID. Lady Skene, you are in trouble — you are ill.

DULCIE [again with the forced society smile]. No, only the fatigue of the season, and the rooms are so crowded, aren't they?

[A group of guests begin little gestures and significant glances and whispers, watching DAVID and DULCIE]

[EDDIE re-enters, and unnoticed looks from one group to the other]

DAVID. I'll tell Sir Winchmore.

DULCIE. No, don't take any notice. If I can only get through this evening! [With a sudden instinct, appealing to him with great entreaty] Tell me something that will carry me through this next hour till they have all gone. Give me that sort of medicine!

DAVID [with the utmost tenderness and feeling, in a low voice, bending over her. The glances and whispers continued] Your trouble isn't real. This society world of yours isn't a real world. There's one little star in Andromeda where everything is real. You've wandered down here amongst these shadows when you should have stayed at home.

DULCIE [pleased, lending herself to his suggestions]. Aren't these real men and women?

DAVID. No. They are only masquerading. Good God, I think we are all masquerading! Look at them! If you touched them with reality they would vanish. And so with your trouble of to-night. Fly back to Andromeda, and you will see what a dream all this is.

DULCIE. How strange! I was half dead a moment ago, and you've made me so well and happy. But you — do you belong to Andromeda, — or to this world?

[EDDIE has been watching and comes down nearer to them]

DAVID. To both. But the star in Andromeda is my home, only wandering with you among phantoms.

[They have become for the moment quite absorbed. EDDIE has been watching the whispering, smiles, comes up to them, and speaks rather sharply]

EDDIE. Lady Skene — that shade — [Pointing off] Won't you fire? [Taking DAVID's arm, and him away] I want to talk to Davy.

[DULCIE turns to look after them, points to the lamp-shade, and gives him directions to go to it]

DAVID [turns savagely on EDDIE and growls]. Why the devil did you bring me between us?

EDDIE. Don't you care for Davy?

DAVID. Care for her?

[DULCIE, having given her instructions, goes to go to the door]

EDDIE. Do you know what the folks are saying? That Sir Winchmore is ruined, and that you have landed into a fortune.

DAVID. Well?

EDDIE. And that she continues to give parties, her dresses, her house, her — you —

[Stops, looks at DAVID, and looks at him savagely. Stands for a moment reflecting, his face then assumes an expression of great resolve]

EDDIE [watching him]. I want to tell you, Davy?

DAVID [shakes EDDIE's hand, and makes another little pause]. Go and tell Eddie, that I must see her for five minutes by and by — to-night, if everybody is gone.

EDDIE. What are you going to do, Davy?

DAVID. We'll get away soon, tomorrow, old boy. The obscurity is nearly finished, and — there's no more tattle between the snows and the sun. Go and tell her I must see her, and she'll back her answer.

EDDIE. [To DULCIE] You must have been down to supper, Lady Skene.

DULCIE. I really don't want to go.

EDDIE. But I've a message for you.

DULCIE. A message?

EDDIE. From Andromeda.

[Exit DULCIE and EDDIE]

CLARICE. You are really too

CHFLOWER [buzzing round RE-
That's a charming theory of
about the effect of sun-spots on

. Yes. It isn't true, but it's
consoling. That's why I invented

Y. If it's charming and con-
why should it be true?

. Why should it? and put
ing else out of focus.

CHFLOWER. Out of focus! Ah!
did you're a dreadful, dreadful
t.

. No; but I'm as willing to
at part as any other, since it's
jest.

LEY. In jest? What do you

. I have to spend so much
ne amongst the stars, that when
back into the world I am quite

. I find myself amongst crowds
ows — very charming shadows
e — playing at money-making,
at religion, playing at love, at
olitics, at all sorts of odd games,
or the time, I join in the game,
tend to take an interest in it;
ery pleasant game it is, so long
on't mistake it for reality.

LEY. But surely we are reali-

. With the profoundest re-
the world, Lady Shalford, I
bring myself to believe that you
ill, I won't spoil your game by
out.

CHFLOWER [with a little affected,
earnestness]. Oh, but surely,
here is Something real Some-
Oh, yes — surely, surely — we
lieve that there is — hum? eh?
ind of — eh? — a Sort of a
ng — Somewhere, eh?

. If you like to believe there
d of a sort of a something —
ere — and you find it consoling,
willing to pretend to believe that
ing else.

CHFLOWER [still with the same
earnestness]. Oh, but surely,
ou look into your own heart —
h? —

. I always wear a mask over
t. I never dare look into it.

Y. I find this world a remark-
omfortable and well-arranged
I always do exactly as I like.

If I want anything I buy it, whether I
pay for it or no. If I see a woman I
admire I make love to her, whether she
belongs to another man or no. If a lie
will answer my purpose, I tell it. I
can't remember I ever denied myself
one single pleasure in life; nor have I
ever put myself out to oblige a fellow-
creature. I am consistently selfish and
I find it pays; I credit everybody else
with the same consistent selfishness,
and I am never deceived in my esti-
mate of character. These are my prin-
ciples, and I always act up to them.
And I assure you I find this world the
pleasantest possible place.

DAVID. A fairy palace! An en-
chanted spot! Only take care! While
you are dancing, there may be a volcano
underneath.

MONTY. If there is, surely dancing
is the pleasantest preparation for the
general burst-up.

EDDIE. Davy —

DAVID [goes to him]. Well?

EDDIE. She'll see you to-night.
Come back here when they've all gone.

BLANCHFLOWER. [To MONTY] How
charmingly frank you are, Monty.

MONTY. Why not? We have one
supreme merit in this generation — we
have ceased to render to virtue the
homage of hypocrisy.

DAVID. And our moral evolution is
now complete. Good-night!

[Exeunt DAVID and EDDIE]

MONTY [coming down with LADY
CLARICE]. Of course I know there is
something wretchedly philistine and
provincial about marriage, but I will
take care this aspect of it is never pre-
sented to you.

LADY CLARICE. I wonder what
makes marriage so unlovely and so
uninteresting?

MONTY. The exaggerated notion
that prevails of its duties and respon-
sibilities. Once do away with that,
and it becomes an ideal state. Lady
Clarice, you'd find me the most agree-
able partner in the world.

LADY CLARICE. You'd be like most
other husbands, I suppose.

MONTY. No; I should be unique.
Husbands, as a rule, are foolish, jealous
brutes, who insist that men shall have
all the rights and women all the duties,
— men shall have all the sweets and
women all the sour of the marriage
state. We would start on an entirely
new plan. The sour we would nat-

urally equally avoid, and the sweets, — if there are any, — we would naturally do our best to secure.

LADY CLARICE. Separately, or together?

MONTY. According to our tastes. If you do me the honour to accept me, I pledge you my word I will never have the offensively bad taste to speak of a husband's rights. There shall be no "lord and master" nonsense.

LADY CLARICE. It sounds very well in theory. I wonder how it would work.

MONTY. Let us try. If we succeed we shall solve the vexed question of the age, and make ourselves happy in showing mankind the road to happiness.

LADY CLARICE. But if we fail?

MONTY. We shall have sacrificed ourselves for the benefit of our species. But we can't fail, the plan is perfect.

LADY CLARICE. If I spoke of rights and duties — if I were jealous —

MONTY. Ah! then you would be departing from the plan. Its charm is that it is a patent, self-adjusting, self-repairing, safety-valve plan, with double escapement action suited to all climates and dispositions. No rights, no duties, no self-assertion, no quarrels, no jealousy.

LADY CLARICE. And no love?

MONTY. Love is a perverted animal instinct, which is really a great bar to solid happiness in marriage. Believe me, you will like me and respect me in the end for not pretending to any such outworn impulses. You see I am frank.

LADY CLARICE. You are indeed.

[*Looking at him very closely, watching him*] You know — [*Pause*] — my father cannot make any great settlements, and — [*Watching him closely*] I have no expectations.

MONTY [*stands it without flinching*]. So I am aware. I'm frightfully in debt, and I have no expectations. But there is a house in Grosvenor Place — it would suit us exactly.

LADY CLARICE [*watching him*]. But — without money?

MONTY. I cannot afford to be economical. I have acted on that principle throughout life, and I have always had the very best of everything. I do not see we need change it.

LADY CLARICE. You are perfectly atrocious — I don't care for you in the least.

MONTY [*with great politeness*]. The plan is precisely adapted to such a case.

LADY CRANDOVER. Come, C. I don't think everybody is going.

MONTY. I shall call on Lord Crandover to-morrow. You don't think silence gives consent?

LADY CLARICE. I can't help it. I'm calling.

[*Exit. MONTY stands in deliberation. CHARLEY comes out from the conservatory, looking for him. She has been watching the last part of the scene in the conservatory*]

CHARLEY. Well?

MONTY. Landed, I think. I'm sure about Sir Joseph and the estate.

CHARLEY. Quite. But it's not known yet. I'm a pet, ain't I?

MONTY. You are. [*Kisses her*]

CHARLEY. I must be going. The creature at home will be raising a row.

MONTY. When do you pass to Aix?

CHARLEY. Thursday, pray. I'll see Lord!

MONTY. When shall I call?

CHARLEY. Friday?

MONTY. What time?

CHARLEY. Come to lunch?

MONTY. Yes.

CHARLEY. Friday at two [*change looks full of meaning*]

MONTY. Bye-bye.

CHARLEY. Oh dear, am I to go? Good-bye, dear [*Kisses DULCIE*].

come and see me to my carriage.

MONTY. Good-bye, Lady Sheldrake.

DULCIE. Good-bye.

[*Exit MONTY and CHARLEY*]

DULCIE. [*To SERVANT*] They expect Mr. Remon. Show him in.

SERVANT. Yes, my lady.

[*Exit. HELEN appears, still in nurse's costume*]

HELEN [*peeps in*]. They have gone, dear.

DULCIE. I've got such a fever. Put your nice cold hand on my forehead. That's right. Hold it tight. Why didn't you dress at once into my party?

HELEN. I was so tired and had the last, and I wanted to be with you.

DULCIE. She's all right?

HELEN. Yes. She was a moment ago.

DULCIE [*suddenly*]. Fetch her! I must see her! Oh, you're right. It's been a hateful evening, with

ght spot in it — when he came
ispered something so sweet.

EN [suddenly]. Dulcie, you're
yourself?

IE. I'm sure of him.

EN. He has never spoken — of

IE. Of love? Never. What
at matter? I know he loves me.

EN. Dulcie, you shouldn't say
even to yourself.

IE. Oh, that's all nonsense,
as if there was ever a woman in
rld that didn't know when she
ed!

EN. Dulcie!

IE [provokingly]. He loves me!
es me! He loves me, and I'm
amed of it, and I don't care who
it. [Throwing her arms round
s neck] Nell, I'm so happy.

EN. Why?

IE. He's coming, he's coming.
ys we are utterly ruined. We're
but I won't feel it to-night. I'll
to-morrow. I'll be happy for
ute to-night. He is coming.

EN. Mr. Remon?

IE. Yes. Don't look shocked,
listen; this is true. Mr. Re-
d I have never said one word
other that all the world might
re heard. [Pause] I'm glad all
ld hasn't heard it, though.

ON comes in, announces MR.
REMON]

IE. [To HELEN] Go and fetch
Yes! Yes!

Exit HELEN. DAVID has entered;
SERVANT has gone off]

VID] I'm so glad you've come.
you to see Rosy. She's awake.
never seen her.

[All this very excited]

D. I shall be very pleased.

[Looking at her]

IE. You're thinking about me.
D. I was thinking that a mother
most beautiful thing on earth.

IE. Oh, you don't know! You
nagine! She's over two years
d I haven't got over remember-
at she's mine. Every time I
f her I feel a little catch here in
y middle of my heart, a delicious
ab, as if some angel came behind
l whispered to me, "God has
ou a present of ten hundred
nd million pounds all your own."
makes up to me for everything.

[DAVID is approaching her with great
tenderness when HELEN enters with
ROSY, the two-year-old baby, in her
arms in nightclothes]

DULCIE [rushes to HELEN]. There!
There! You may look at her!

HELEN. Hush! She's asleep!

DULCIE. I must kiss her if it kills
her! [Hugging the baby, kisses her, lifts
the nightgown, kisses the baby's feet,
croons over it — points her finger mock-
ingly at REMON in childlike mockery and
laughter] There! There! There, Mr.
Philosopher from Andromeda! You
can't say a mother's love isn't real!

DAVID. I never did. It's the one
thing that shows what a sham the rest
of the world is. That little star in
Andromeda is crowded with mothers.
They've all been there once in their
lives.

[Bends over the baby for a mo-
ment]

DULCIE [excited, feverish]. Nell, Mr.
Remon has an odd notion that this
world isn't real.

HELEN. The cure for that is to earn
half-a-crown a day and live on it.

DAVID. Oh yes, I know. Work is
real.

[Bends over the baby]

DULCIE. [To DAVID] What are you
looking at? [Scrutinizes him carefully;
then suddenly, with savage earnestness,
half despair, half entreaty] She's like
me? She's like me!! [crescendo, tiger-
ish, frenzied] Say she's like me!!!

DAVID [very quietly]. She is like you.
[Kisses the child reverently] She is
wholly like you!

DULCIE [stands absorbed, very quietly].
Take her back again to the nursery,
Nell.

HELEN. Good-night, Mr. Remon.

DAVID. Good-night.

[Goes towards the door with her]

HELEN. [To DAVID, smiling] I've
just remembered something else that
is real.

DAVID. What's that?

HELEN. Duty.

[Exit with baby. A summer sun-
rise shines pink through the
conservatory, and lights up the
room with summer morning
light. DAVID returns to DUL-
CIE, who sits absorbed]

DAVID. Lady Skene, I asked to see
you because — it is necessary for me
to leave England very soon.

DULCIE. No — no!

DAVID. Yes — yes. I never use the word "honour" about my conduct, because every scamp has used it until it's the most counterfeit word in the language. But I've just learned that if I stay in England I shall injure very deeply a friend of mine, so naturally I'm going away.

DULCIE. But — tell me — [Pause] — what —

DAVID. If I stay I cannot continue an honest man. Will you let it rest there?

DULCIE. If you wish —

DAVID [after a little pause, with some embarrassment]. I have just heard — I scarcely know how to mention it — that you may be placed in a position of some difficulty.

DULCIE. You mean that Sir Brice is ruined. In one way it's a relief, because at any rate it will break up this life, and I'm so tired of it.

DAVID. Yet you thought you would like it on that night of the Hunt Ball.

DULCIE. Yes. I longed for it. Is life like that all through?

DAVID. Like what?

DULCIE. To long for a thing very much and to find it worthless, and then to long for something else much more — to be sure that this is worth having — to get it, and then to find that that is worthless too. And so on, and so on, and so on?

DAVID. I'm afraid life is very much like that on this particular planet.

DULCIE. Oh, but that would be awful if I found out that — [Stops]

DAVID. What?

DULCIE. Nothing. You remember that night of the Hunt Ball?

DAVID [nods]. It was the last time I saw my friend George Copeland. He died in Alaska six months after.

DULCIE. And you went away for over a year.

DAVID. No — only for a few weeks. After Copeland's funeral I went to the Mediterranean to choose a site for my observatory, and I was back in England within less than three months.

DULCIE. But we never saw you till last season. Where were you?

DAVID. When you were in the country, I was there; when you were in town I was in town too. I have never been far away from you. I have kept an account of every time I have seen you for the last three years.

DULCIE [looks at him as if suddenly

struck with a thought]. Tell me were you two years ago last M

DAVID. At Gerard's Heat. you.

DULCIE [suddenly]. Did y night Rosy was — I mean the the second — it was a dreadful storm —

DAVID. I remember.

DULCIE. One of my nurses saw some one in the garden.

[Look

DAVID. It was I. Your li danger. I passed those tw outside your window.

[DULCIE with great affe voluntarily puts her his arm. He raises and is about to kiss it. re-enters. DAVID rise

HELEN. Sir Brice has ju back and is in the smoking-roo stairs.

DULCIE [turning]. Look! I ing.

DAVID. Good-bye.

DULCIE [suddenly]. No — have another word with yo here a moment. Here is S Nell, take Mr. Remon on to th for a minute or two and wait t him till Sir Brice has gone ups

[Exeunt DAVID and through conservatory balcony]

[SIR BRICE enters, looking a litt and dissipated]

SIR BRICE [staring at DULC a pause]. Well?

DULCIE. Well?

SIR BRICE [drops into a chair, Got rid of your friends?

DULCIE. All except Mr. He's on the balcony with Nell

SIR BRICE. Oh! [Pause. takes some change out of his three shillings and threepence the coins very carefully and e in a longitudinal position on th his left hand, arranging the thre and the three pennies in a line, carelessly] That's our net for girl. [Holding them up under That is our precise capita shillings and threepence. Not another farthing. And so sand pounds' worth of debts.

DULCIE [unconcerned]. Inde

SIR BRICE [with a sudden litt

— not too marked]. Look here! get some money?

. What do you mean?

CE. Get some money! That's lish, isn't it?

. I don't understand you.

ICE. This fellow Remon is ond of you. Can't you get ey from him?

. Hush! Borrow money from

CE [suggestively]. You needn't [DULCIE looks at him inquir- ow can't you get some?

DULCIE looks at him for a mo- ment; she raises her fan to strike him; sees DAVID, who has entered from conservatory. HELEN stands at conservatory door]

Lady Skene, I have been o overhear what has just been -morrow morning I leave for n of France, and I shall be ecessible for some years. My ill have orders to send you a ook and to honour your signa- ny extent that you are likely e. [DULCIE makes a protest] lease—if you please. As I way from England there can- e least slur upon you in accept- Miss Larondie, you will be with er, always. She will be in —always. [Shakes hands with Be very kind to her. Never Good-bye.

. But I — cannot — take — [silencing her]. If you please y last request. Good-bye.

R BRICE, who has been sitting all the while, listening, rises. DAVID looks at him for half a oment; looks at DULCIE.]

[Exit]

Months pass between Acts II and III]

ACT III

- Private sitting-room at the Prince De Galles, Nice. handsome modern room fur- d in French hotel fashion. Two windows, right, curtained. at back. Door left. Small card down stage, left, with several s of cards loosely on it. The

whole floor round the table strewn with cards. Discover SIR BRICE in evening dress seated left of table, aimlessly and mechanically playing with the cards. After a few seconds DULCIE, in dinner dress, enters from door at back, crosses to the win- dow and stands looking out, having taken no notice of SIR BRICE. As she enters he leaves off playing with the cards for a moment, looks at her.

SIR BRICE [in rather a commanding tone, a little brutal]. Come here.

[DULCIE takes no notice. A little pause]

SIR BRICE [louder]. D'ye hear? Come here.

[DULCIE comes down to him, does not speak. He looks up at her. Her face is quite blank, looking indifferently in front of her]

SIR BRICE [begins playing with cards again]. I've lost over six hundred pounds.

[DULCIE takes no notice]

SIR BRICE [dashes the pack of cards under his feet, stamps on them]. Damn and damn the cards!

[DULCIE takes no notice. Slight pause]

SIR BRICE [roars out]. The hotel people have sent up their bill again with a request for payment.

[Slight pause. DULCIE goes back to the window, stands there look- ing out. Pause]

SIR BRICE [roars out furiously]. Why the devil don't you get something for that deafness of yours! [Suddenly jumps up, goes up to her, seizes her hands, turns her round] Now look here —

[HOTEL SERVANT enters, with letter on tray. SIR BRICE desists. The HOTEL SERVANT brings the letter to DULCIE, who crosses and takes it. Exit SERVANT. DULCIE opens letter, reads it]

SIR BRICE. Well? [DULCIE rings bell] Well?

[SERVANT enters]

DULCIE [in cold, equable tone, to SIR BRICE]. Mr. Edward Remon wishes to see me. He asks me to excuse his being in fancy dress. He's going to the Opera Ball. Shall I see him here or in the hall?

SIR BRICE. Here.

DULCIE. [To SERVANT] Show Mr. Remon here. [Exit SERVANT]

SIR BRICE. [*To DULCIE*] Where's his brother, the astronomer?

DULCIE. At his observatory, I suppose. I've not seen him since the night we began to live upon him.

[*HOTEL SERVANT opens door, announces MR. EDWARD REMON. EDDIE enters; dressed as Pierrot for the fancy dress ball. Exit SERVANT*]

EDDIE [*all through the Act very excited*]. How d'ye do? [*To DULCIE; shakes hands with her. To SIR BRICE*] How d'ye do?

SIR BRICE. How d'ye do?

[*Looks meaningly at DULCIE and exit left*]

EDDIE. So good of you to excuse this dress.

DULCIE. Your brother?

EDDIE. He's down in the town with me to-night. We've been dining at the Café de Paris. I've taken three glasses of champagne — anything more than a spoonful makes me tipsy, and so, with that and this dress, and our journey to Africa, I'm quite mad to-night.

DULCIE. Africa!

EDDIE. We start early to-morrow morning to the deadliest place on the West Coast.

DULCIE. Not your brother?

EDDIE. Yes. We're going to watch the transit of Venus, and as there was a jolly lot of fever there all the other astronomers rather funk'd it. So Davy has fitted out an expedition himself.

[*DULCIE shows great concern. EDDIE rattles on*] I'm going to have a spree to-night. I've never been drunk in my life, and I thought I should like to try what it's like — because — [*tossing up a coin*] it's heads we come back alive and prove Davy's theory about sun-spots — and it's tails we leave our bones and all our apparatus out there. It's tails — we're as dead as door-nails. [*Sees DULCIE's pained face*] Lady Skene — I'm so sorry —

DULCIE. We've been three weeks in Nice. Why hasn't your brother come to see me?

EDDIE. A mistaken sense of duty. Davy has the oddest notions about duty. He thinks one ought to do it when it's unpleasant. So do I when I'm in my right clothes, and my right senses, but now I'm half tipsy, and have got a fool's cap on, I can see quite plainly that duty's all moonshine. Duty is doing exactly what one likes, and it's

Davy's duty to come to you. A fool is just breaking his head for the sight of you. Shall I find him here?

DULCIE. Where is he?

EDDIE. He's in the town, everything ready for to-morrow. I find him?

DULCIE [*looking at her watch*] to eleven. I may be alone in an hour. Yes, bring him to me.

EDDIE. Hurrah! — *Au revoir*!

[*SIR BRICE appears at the same time after EDDIE, who exits. "Adieu." SIR BRICE enters*]

SIR BRICE. [*To DULCIE*]

[*DULCIE does not reply. SIR BRICE follows her, the door opens in his face and a loud knock to turn. SIR BRICE seizes the door handle, kicks the door vicious and spiteful, and then a step or two, kicks a*]

[*SERVANT enters, announcing MONTY. INGTON. Enter MONTY. nods*]

MONTY. Well, dear chum, I'm sitting round at the cards on the floor. You give Fancourt his revenge.

SIR BRICE. Damn the cards! MONTY. By all means. Hark you, Skene?

SIR BRICE [*mutters*]. — Hark you, Skene.

MONTY. By all means.

SIR BRICE. You're married, Ington —

MONTY. I am three months in the groom.

SIR BRICE. Why the devil don't you get married?

MONTY. Because I ascertained that my wife would have seven children in a year. Why did you?

SIR BRICE. Because I was a fool.

MONTY. Well, there could be no better reasons for getting married.

SIR BRICE [*furious with MONTY*] — mn everything and everybody.

MONTY. By all means. We've reached finality and the sport of destiny, will you have a good turn?

SIR BRICE. What?

MONTY. I'm going to take you to the Opera Ball, and I f

will be dull, or I should say in my absence. I know you going to the Cercle d'Amerique your farthing chance of eternity

BRICE. Well?

CHARLEY. It would momentarily reinstate your celestial hopes if you would tell Lady Skene that I'm going to the theatre with you, and persuade her to spend the lonely hours of her widowhood with Lady Clarice in number three. They will doubtless reduce your characters to rags, but that will save you from the worse mischief of being left with us.

BRICE. Will you do me a good turn?

CHARLEY. Anything in my power.

BRICE. Lend me a couple of pounds.

CHARLEY. My dear Bricey. If my name, or my presence, for anything at the Cercle d'Amerique, you're welcome to it.

BRICE. Will you come with me to the Opera Ball for a quarter of an hour?

CHARLEY. Certainly.

BRICE. I'll ask Lady Skene. [To the door at back, raps] Are you there? [A little louder] Are you there?

CHARLEY. Throw in a "my dear," or some such trifle. Its effect is in proportion to its scarcity.

BRICE. My dear! [Rapping still] Lushington has called. [Rapping] Hear, my love? [With a grimace] The last word. The door is a little ajar. [SIR BRICE forces his way in] Sir Brice wants to know if you will sit with her while —

[The remainder of sentence is lost by the closing of door after him]

BRICE enters door, with opera cloak]

CHARLEY [showing surprise, which he checks]. Where so gay and so soon?

BRICE [looking him straight in the eye determinedly]. To the Opera Ball.

CHARLEY. Oh.

BRICE. You're going to take that?

CHARLEY. I know many ladies, but

CHARLEY [her voice heard outside]. If Mr. Lushington is there,

and say a lady is waiting for him in the hall — oh, he's in there; I'll go in.

[MONTY is going. LADY CLARICE makes a little movement to intercept him]

MONTY [in a low voice]. Don't be foolish.

CHARLEY [her voice at door, outside]. Aren't you nearly ready, Monty? [Appears at door, sees LADY CLARICE, takes in the situation at a glance, has a slight shock, but instantly recovers herself. Runs to LADY CLARICE, brimming with affection] Darling, are you going too? So pleased! So charmed! How sweet of you!

[Offers to kiss LADY CLARICE]

CLARICE [indignantly]. How dare you!

MONTY [stepping between them]. Hush! [To CLARICE] What's the use of having a row here, or anywhere? For Heaven's sake, do be a good sensible girl, and don't shatter the happiness of our married life before — before we know where we are. Charley and I are going to the Opera Ball, will you come with us?

CLARICE [indignant]. What!

MONTY. Or go by yourself. Or go with any one you please. Or go anywhere or do anything in the world you like. Only don't make a scene here.

CLARICE. My father shall know.

MONTY. Very well. Very well. We'll discuss that by and by. But do recognise once and for all the futility of rows. You'd better come with us.

[Enter SIR BRICE]

CLARICE. Come with you?

CHARLEY [begins]. My dear Clarice, I assure you —

MONTY [stops CHARLEY with a warning look]. For Heaven's sake, Clarice, whatever we do, do not let us make ourselves ridiculous. [MONTY snatches up LADY CLARICE's arm. She reluctantly allows him to do so] All right, Bricey. Sorry I can't come with you to the Club — but I've persuaded Lady Clarice and Lady Shalford to come to the Opera Ball with me. Bye, bye, dear cronies, our love to Lady Skene. Hope you will have as pleasant an evening as we shall — Ta! Ta!

[Exit with great animation, LADY CLARICE holding reluctantly and aloof on one arm, CHARLEY more affectionate on the other. SIR BRICE goes to DULCIE's door,

throws it wide open, stands back, calls]

SIR BRICE. Now, will you let us understand each other once for all?

[DULCIE enters, looks at him without speaking]

SIR BRICE. I want some money. This fellow Remon has offered you his purse to any extent. Get a few hundreds for me to go on with.

DULCIE. No.

SIR BRICE. You won't? Then why did you begin to take his money?

DULCIE. Because I was weak, because you bullied me, and because I knew I was welcome.

SIR BRICE. Very good. The same reasons continue. You're weak, I'm a bully, and you're welcome. Aren't you welcome, eh? Aren't you welcome?

DULCIE. I believe I am welcome to every penny he has in the world.

SIR BRICE. He loves you?

DULCIE. Yes.

SIR BRICE. And you love him?

DULCIE [*looking straight at SIR BRICE very fearlessly and calmly*]. With all my heart.

SIR BRICE. And you aren't ashamed to tell me?

DULCIE. Is there anything in your past life that you have taken the trouble to hide from me? Have you ever openly or secretly had an attachment to any living creature that does you as much credit and so little shame as my love for David Remon does to me?

SIR BRICE. All right. Go on loving him. You needn't hesitate. He expects a fair exchange—if he hasn't already got it.

DULCIE [*very calmly*]. That's a lie, and you know it is.

SIR BRICE. Very well. It's a lie. I don't care one way or the other. Get me some money.

DULCIE. You have had the last farthing that you will ever touch of David Remon's money.

SIR BRICE. All right. [*Jumps up very determinedly*] Then you've seen the last you will see of your child for some years to come.

DULCIE [*aroused*]. What! you will hit me through my child!

SIR BRICE. I think *my* child's health requires a change for a few years—a different climate from you and myself.

We will go upon a little tour selves, shall we? to—where shall we go? I don't care. I s Rosy away to-morrow mornin hear?

DULCIE. I hear.

SIR BRICE. If I don't see y to-night, get her ready by t morning.

DULCIE [*stands for a momen quiet, then bursts into a fit of iron ter*] Nell! [*Goes to the door at b out*] Nell! Nell! Come here

[HELEN enters]

HELEN. What's the matter

DULCIE. Nell, old girl, h got such a thing as a Church about you?

HELEN. Church Service?

DULCIE. I want you to tel end and meaning of marriage. something about it in the Ch vice, isn't there? I did go th once, I know, but I've forgot it's all about. *What does it me*

HELEN. Marriage?

DULCIE. Yes. Oh, I kno one of Mr. Remon's games.

HELEN. Games?

DULCIE. Yes. He says n women are playing a lot of que on earth that they call religi politics, and this and that other—marriage must be o it's the funniest of them all two-handed game like—like or tossing up. You choose y ner—head's he's a good 'u you're in clover; tails he's a then, it's purgatory and infern for the rest of your life, unlea a man. It's all right if you'r The same game as before, cho partner—heads she's a good ' you're in clover; tails she's a then you cut her, and toss up a again, until you do get a g That's the game—that's the and it's a splendid game for a

[BLANCHFLOWER, in evening dr in]

BLANCHFLOWER. How d'ye Skene? Am I in the way, eh?

DULCIE. Enter! Enter! You're just in time. Help this mighty question.

BLANCHFLOWER. Something tant, eh?

No, only marriage.
 FLOWER. What about it?
 Well — what about it?
 your opinion. There's some-
 mystical about it, isn't there?
 ere's that Church Service?
 g mystical?
 FLOWER. Well, yes; and —
 [happy thought] — something

Mystical and ideal. Go

I'd rather not. I don't like
 you mocking at marriage.
 [laughing]. Mocking at mar-
 riage, my God! is it women who
 tried bad men that mock at
 marriage? Make haste, make haste!
 [her hands on the chair] Mar-
 ried, mystical, ideal state — isn't
 anything in the Service about
 marriage? Go on, Nell, go on — help
 me on! What have we left out?

The wife's duty.
 Yah. Yah. Yah.
 This is very quiet and calm, with
 a pause between each Yah, very
 different from the excited Yah!
 Yah! Yah! Yah! of the second
 Act]

To her husband to keep her
 pure for herself to keep herself pure
 for herself, because it is her glory,
 her man's glory to be brave and

[same position, same tone].
 Yah.

And to society, to her
 because no nation has ever
 whose women have been im-

[suddenly springing up, sitting
 in the chair]. And the men?

I don't know whether it's
 duty to be moral. I'm sure
 man's.

Oh, then marriage is a
 state, eh — at least for women,
 Blanchflower?

FLOWER [who has shown symp-
 atic discomfort through the inter-
 — es — decidedly marriage
 — a — should be a moral state.

[jumping up vigorously]. Ah,
 we got it! Now we can go
 Marriage is a physical, mystical,
 moral game. Oh, I hate these
 moral, ideal. How if it isn't
 suppose it's horribly, horribly
 w if it isn't moral? Suppose
 ly, horribly immoral! Moral!

Moral!! Moral!!! Is there anything
 under God's sun so immoral, ah —
 guess it — guess it — to be married to a
 man one hates! And you go on plaster-
 ing it and poulticing it and sugaring it
 over with "moral" and "ideal" and
 "respectable," and all those words that
 men use to cheat themselves with. It
 isn't moral to be married to a man one
 hates! It isn't ideal! It isn't mystical!
 It's hateful! It's martyrdom!

[A long pause]

BLANCHFLOWER [calm, with a real
 touch of feeling]. My dear Lady Skene,
 I won't pretend to offer you advice —

DULCIE [has recovered from her out-
 burst, now speaks in a very calm, indiffer-
 ent, matter-of-fact tone]. It doesn't mat-
 ter. You're going to the ball?

BLANCHFLOWER. I was going — but
 if I can help you in any way —
 [Struck with the idea] My uncle, Canon
 Butterfield, is here for the winter. He
 suffers from liver, and has written a
 book on Socinianism. If you want any
 spiritual advice, I'm sure you couldn't
 do better.

DULCIE. What is Socinianism? Is
 it anything to do with marriage?

BLANCHFLOWER. Well — ah — no.
 Shall I send him?

DULCIE. No, I won't trouble you.
 I'll think this out for myself.

BLANCHFLOWER. Well, if you ever
 do need a clergyman, don't forget my
 uncle. You can't do better. Or if at
 any time I can be of any use —

DULCIE. Thank you. Good-night.

BLANCHFLOWER [shaking hands very
 sympathetically]. Good-bye. [Exit]

DULCIE [suddenly]. Nell! [HELEN
 comes to her] Take Rosy up at once,
 dress her, get out of the hotel by the
 servants' way so that you don't meet
 Sir Brice — take her over to Beaulieu
 to the Hôtel des Anglais, and wait there
 till to-morrow morning. I'll send you
 a message what to do.

[SERVANT enters, announces Mr. REMON
 — Mr. EDWARD REMON. Enter
 DAVID and EDDIE, still in Pierrot's
 dress. HELEN shows some surprise]
 [Exit SERVANT]

DULCIE. Quick, Nell, do as I tell
 you.

HELEN [looking at DAVID and EDDIE].
 Promise me —

DULCIE. What?

HELEN. You'll take no step till
 you've seen me.

DULCIE. I promise. Make haste. Come here and tell me when Rosy's ready.

HELEN [*comes to DAVID, shakes hands with him*]. You heard her promise.

DAVID. She shall keep it.

[*Exit HELEN at back*]

EDDIE. I've brought him, Lady Skene. I'm off to the ball. I'm not so tipsy now as I was, but I'm going to have my fling. It's my only chance of going to the devil. Davy, where shall I meet you?

DAVID. I'll come to the Opera House for you. Wait for me there.

EDDIE. Come as soon as you can, won't you? You come too, Lady Skene. You can't think how jolly it is to have no duty and no conscience and no faith and no future, no anything but pleasure and life! Do come! Let's all be fools for once in our lives! Let's be monkeys again! Come on! Come on!

[*Exit. As soon as he has gone,*

DAVID and DULCIE, who have been standing on opposite sides of the room, go to each other very calmly. They meet in the middle of the room, take each other's hands. He raises hers to his lips. DAVID's appearance has changed since the last Act; he is more worn and spiritual, a little greyer, very calm at first, an unearthly look in his face. They stand looking at each other for some moments]

DULCIE. You're changed! You're not well!

DAVID. Quite well. So well, I feel no ill can ever happen to me.

DULCIE. Why did you not come to me before?

DAVID. I'd been able to do you a service. I didn't wish you to think that I had any claim on you.

DULCIE. Ah, you shouldn't misunderstand me. I could never misunderstand you like that. I've taken your money. I knew I was welcome, because — if I were rich and you were poor, I would give you all I had.

DAVID. Ah! Take all I have!

DULCIE. Not another farthing.

DAVID. Why not?

DULCIE. I would be proud to owe all my happiness, all my comfort to you. I have been proud these last six months to think that my child's very bread came from you.

DAVID. Ah! [*Coming nearer to her*]

DULCIE. I would only have just sufficient for necessities forced me. I was weak. The end has come. I won't waste more of your money in this [*the cards*] and racing, and — know what.

DAVID. Tell it all.

DULCIE. Things can't go as they are. [*Smiling*] Do you remember the Scotchman who lost his in-law and his aunt and three all in one epidemic? He said "just reedeecelous." Things are reedeecelous" with me. [*Loudly*] Brice has threatened to take me from me.

DAVID. No!

DULCIE. Yes! I'm sending Beaulieu with her to-night. I know what will happen. I don't care much. It doesn't matter in matters. [*Smiling. Then den alarm*] Yes — this journey to Africa. Must you go?

DAVID. I must. I've been for years for this chance. If it will crown all my life's work.

DULCIE. But it's dangerous.

DAVID. I take a doctor along. Besides, I bear a charmed life.

DULCIE. But this fever says it is deadly.

DAVID [*with great calmness away*]. It will pass me. But me, I must go.

DULCIE. No, no, no.

DAVID. Yes, yes, yes. I'm not. All my world, the little world of an interest in me, is waiting. There's the hope of a great part of my one chance of snatching a little laurel-wreath that would call immortality.

DULCIE. But can't you wait another time?

DAVID. I must be at my post especially as it is a little dangerous that makes it the post of honor. I've delayed everything till the moment that I might be near you very end.

DULCIE. The end! The end? I shall never see you.

DAVID. Yes. When I return.

DULCIE [*shaking her head*]. I shall not return. [*Looking at him very and closely*] Tell me, in your hearts do you not know that I shall never come back? [*DAVID is silent*] Ah no — tell me the truth

[*slowly and fatefully*]. I wonder that when one has carefully put all the old superstitions in his mind, a crop of new super-springs up more foolish than the old ones. I've lived up there so long, grown morbid. I've an attack of the oldest form of superstition — a content.

Ah, I knew it!
In six months I shall laugh at it together.
[*determinedly*]. You shall not

I must. I'm working with my hands all over the world. I've done this part of the work. If I carry it out I break faith with the men who are going with me in my dangers are waiting at Marseilles. I can't leave the lurch — I can't — you must have me do it! Say you will have me stamp myself a deserter.

No, no. But I don't want to go. [Approaching him] If I am to stay —

You will not — [Going closer]
You will not [a little nearer]
to stay. [She looks at him — they go closer to each other, and her changes from a calm, dreamy, expression to a fierce, hoarse, passionate one]
You know what it means if I refuse!

You never called me that

[clapping her]. I've never been with you. Dulcie! [With sudden decision, clapping her passionately]
Yes, I'll stay! I'll stay! Tell me why because — because — you

Stay — because — ah, you love me!

Eddie's right. Let's be fools. Let's live to-night! I'm for you! Dulcie, tell me once that you love me.

No — no. Forget it. Have I said? What shall we

I don't know. What does it mean? We will go to this ball — anywhere! Our lives are in our hands. Come with me.

HELEN enters. He shuts the door, and stands against it, his feet a little

sprawling, his hands in his pockets, looking at them maliciously. Long pause. HELEN enters at the other door. Another pause. She beckons DULCIE]

HELEN. Dulcie!

[Indicates the inside room. DULCIE goes up to her]

[Exit HELEN. DULCIE at the door looks at the two men. Exit DULCIE. The two men are left alone. Another slight pause. SIR BRICE walks very deliberately up to DAVID. The two men stand close to each other for a moment or two]

SIR BRICE. You've come to settle your little account, I suppose?

DAVID. I owe you nothing.

SIR BRICE. But I owe you six thousand pounds. I haven't a penny in the world. I'll cut you for it, double or quits.

DAVID. I don't play cards.

SIR BRICE. You'd better begin.

[Rapping on the table with the cards]

DAVID [very firmly]. I don't play cards with you.

SIR BRICE. And I say you shall.

DAVID [very stern and contemptuous]. I don't play cards with you.

[Going towards door]

SIR BRICE. You refuse?

DAVID. I refuse.

SIR BRICE. Once for all, will you give me a chance of paying back the six thousand pounds that Lady Skeno has borrowed from you? Yes or no?

DAVID. No.

SIR BRICE. No?

DAVID [very emphatically]. No. [Goes to door, suddenly turns round, comes up to him] Yes. [Comes to the table] I do play cards with you. You want my money. Very well. I'll give you a chance of winning all I have in the world.

SIR BRICE [after a look of astonishment]. Good. I'm your man. Any game you like, and any stakes.

DAVID [very calm, cold, intense tone all through]. The stakes on my side are some two hundred thousand pounds. The stakes on your side are — your wife and child.

SIR BRICE [taken aback]. My wife and child!

DAVID. Your wife and child. Come — begin! [Points to the cards]

SIR BRICE [*getting flurried*]. My wife and child? [*Puts his hands restlessly through his hair, looks intently at DAVID. Pause*] All right. [*Pause. Cunningly*] I value my wife and child very highly.

DAVID. I value them at all I have in the world. [*Pointing to cards*] Begin!

SIR BRICE. You seem in a hurry.

DAVID. I believe I haven't six months to live. I want to make the most of those six months. If I have more I want to make the most of all the years. Begin!

SIR BRICE [*wipes his face with his handkerchief*]. This is the first time I've played this game. We'd better arrange conditions.

DAVID. There's only one condition. We play till I'm beggared of every farthing I have, or till you're beggared of them. Sit down!

SIR BRICE [*sits down*]. Very well. [*Pause*] What game?

DAVID. The shortest.

SIR BRICE. Simple cutting?

DAVID. What you please. Begin!

SIR BRICE. There's no hurry. I mean to have a night's fun out of this.

DAVID. Look at me. Don't trifle with me! I want to have done with you. I want them to have done with you. I want to get them away from you. Quick! I want to know now — now — this very moment — whether they are yours or mine. Begin.

SIR BRICE [*shuffles the cards*]. All right. What do we cut for?

DAVID. Let one cut settle it.

SIR BRICE. No. It's too much to risk on one throw.

DAVID. One cut. Begin.

SIR BRICE. It's too big. I can't. I like high play, but that's too high for me. [*DAVID remains at table, very calm; does not stir through all the scene; SIR BRICE walking about*] No, by Jove! I'll tell you what I'll do. Three cuts out of five. Damn it all! I'm game! Two out of three. By Jove, two out of three! Will that do?

DAVID. So be it! Sit down! Shuffle.

[*SIR BRICE sits down; begins shuffling the cards. All through the scene he is nervous, excited, hysterical, laughing. DAVID as cold as a statue*]

SIR BRICE [*having shuffled*]. Now then. Who cuts first?

[*The two men stare fixedly at each other*]

[*DULCIE enters at back*]

DULCIE [*surprised*]. Mr. No! No! Not that! Not t

DAVID [*coming down, warni with a motion of his hand*]. please. Stand aside for a mo

[*Offers the cards to SIR BRICE*]

SIR BRICE. Ace counts low

DAVID. As you will. Cut

[*SIR BRICE*]

SIR BRICE. King! By Jove Cut!

[*D*]

SIR BRICE. Nine! One to Jove! one to me! [*To DULCIE*]

[*DAVID by a gesture s*]

[*takes up the pack that*]

[*has broken and shuffle*]

SIR BRICE. Shuffle up. By

I win —

DULCIE. Mr. Remon, y play any more?

DAVID [*very gently*]. Sta please.

SIR BRICE. No. Let her us. She's in it, isn't she?

DULCIE. What do you mea are you playing for?

SIR BRICE. You'd like would you? What are we pl I'll tell you. We're playing fo your child!

DULCIE [*suddenly*]. What great horror and astonishm Remon! It's not so? It's not

DAVID] What are you playin

DAVID. He has said. For your child. If I win, will you the bargain?

[*Very long pause — sh one to the other*]

DULCIE. Yes.

DAVID [*puts cards on table*].

[*They both sh*]

SIR BRICE [*very excited, nervous*]. You've got to win! You know that?

DAVID. I know.

SIR BRICE [*cuts*]. Ten. You've got to beat it. Cut cuts] Queen! One each! the final, d'ye hear? This is I win — [*Walking about excite out a glass of brandy — d cut first! No! Damn it cut first! [Holding cards. D Six. [To DAVID, suddenly] win — you'll pay me? You pay me?*]

D. I shall pay you every far-
 BRICE. What security do you
 ?
 D. My word in the presence of
 man I love.
 BRICE [walks about]. Let me be
 nt.
 D. Cut.
 BRICE. [To DULCIE]. You're
 are you? I'm going to win!
 it! I'm going to win! [To
 Now! [DAVID holds cards;
 CE cuts] My God! I've lost!
 D [throws down the card-table;
 him; catches hold of him by the
 Yes, you've lost! She's mine!
 m down on his knees] You've
 me of her all these years!
 cheated me of her love, cheated
 the fatherhood of her child,
 dragged her down, you've dis-
 d her! She's my wife now —
 e and child! Take your oath
 ever lay claim to them again!
 ! [Shaking him]
 BRICE. She's yours! Take her!
 er see her or her child again!
 it! Take them!
 D. Dare to break your word —
 y a finger on her or her child —
 show your face in the home that
 e shall give to her — and what-
 s men have made to bind you
 together, I'll break them and
 of you! D'ye hear? She's
 She's mine! She's mine!
 SIR BRICE back on the floor. To
] My wife! My child! Come!
 mine!
 DAVID seizes DULCIE in his arms
 and falls against door. Curtain
 begins to descend when SIR
 BRICE thrown down]

ACT IV

The Observatory on Mount
 Sidelli in the Maritime Alps, near
 ce.

. right. A large fireplace, with
 e cones and pine logs ready laid,
 ve door, right. At the back, seen
 ough a large curtained doorway,
 the circular Observatory with large
 scope. This room is vaguely
 n, the telescope being lighted by
 shaft of moonlight at the beginning

of the Act. On the left side, slant-
 wise, a large window, with terrace
 outside, giving scenery of the Mari-
 time Alps. A large armchair above
 the fireplace. On table and scattered
 about the room are a number of scien-
 tific books and astronomical instru-
 ments and apparatus. The window
 is curtained with Eastern curtains.
 As curtain rises the whole scene is
 dark except for the shaft of moon-
 light that falls on the telescope.

[Enter DAVID and DULCIE]

DAVID. Come in! Come to your
 home! My wife!

DULCIE [cold, shuddering]. Ah no —
 don't call me that — at least not yet.

DAVID. You're shivering! Let me
 give you some wine.

[Goes to cupboard, brings out
 bottle and glass, which he fills,
 places them on table]

DULCIE. No, no, tell me —

[Goes to him, looks into his face]

DAVID [with great tenderness]. Dul-
 cie! Dulcie! What is it, dear? How
 cold you are. I'll light the fire.
 [Lights fire, which is already laid with
 large pine cones and logs and quickly
 blazes up] I'm your servant now. I've
 nothing to do all my life but wait on
 you. We shall soon have a blaze with
 these pine logs. My servants left me
 last night. I thought I should have
 no further use for them. I thought my
 life here was ended. Ended! My life
 has only begun this last hour. [Clasp-
 ing her] Dulcie! Do you know where
 you are? You are in your home. Take
 off your hat and cloak, dear. [Gently
 removes her cloak and puts it on chair]
 There! [Seats her at the fire in large
 chair] This is your own hearth, dear,
 your own fireside. You are my bride!
 No bride was ever so welcome as you.
 Poor hands so cold. [Takes her hands
 in his, rubs them; as he does so, they
 both at one moment see her wedding-ring.
 DULCIE withdraws her hand in shame.
 They look at each other horrified. A
 pause] Give me your hand.

[She holds it out. He takes off the
 ring, goes to window, draws
 aside the curtains, opens win-
 dow, throws away the ring,
 comes back to her. The dawn
 outside begins and gradually
 rises into a full sunrise during
 progress of Act]

DULCIE [*as he returns to her*]. Oh, you'll be very kind to me?

DAVID. I have no life, no ambition away from you. The world has gone from me. This journey to Africa — it was the object of my life — it's less than nothing to me now. I've thrown it away, I've forgotten it, because you asked me.

DULCIE. Ah no, you mustn't do that. Oh, I'm selfish to take you from your comrades, from your work. You must go and make this great discovery.

DAVID. I've made the one great discovery there was to make. It's the cunningest of them all. We astronomers have been puzzling all our lives to find out what gravitation is. I've found it out. Gravitation is love. It's love that holds together all this universe. It's love that drives every little atom in space to rush to every other little atom. There's love at the centre of the system. There's love at the centre of all things. No astronomer ever made a discovery equal to that! Dulcie, look at me! What ails you? What are you thinking of?

DULCIE. Nell and Rosy. They'll be here soon.

DAVID. Yes. They can't be long. Don't think of them. Think only of ourselves.

DULCIE. Why wouldn't you come with me to Beaulieu and bring them up here?

DAVID. I was afraid your sister would take you from me. I wanted to have you all to myself. When she comes here I wanted her to find you already in your home.

DULCIE. It's so strange.

DAVID. What is strange?

DULCIE. To be here with you — alone.

DAVID. It's not strange to me. You've been here so often already. In my loneliness I've pictured you here hundreds of times. I at my work in there, you in this chair by the fire, Rosy playing about the floor.

DULCIE. Rosy.

DAVID. She is my child now, as you are my wife. Dulcie, say you know we have done right.

DULCIE [*distracted*]. Right! Yes — yes — I suppose so! What else could we do? What else could I do!

DAVID. Say you know we have done right.

DULCIE. Yes — yes — I can't think

now. [*Returning and throwing him round him*] I only know I love

DAVID [*claspings her madly*]. this is your home, this is our way day. My bride!

DULCIE [*tearing herself from him*]. No, no — not now — not yet — promise to Nell — I promised would take no step till I had seen

DAVID [*pursuing her, fiercely*]. her] You've taken the step. mine —

DULCIE. No, no. [*Repulsed again*] Let me think. Wait till it comes. Ah, don't think I don't love you. There's nothing I would not suffer for you. There's not a thought in my heart that isn't yours. Say you know it! Say you know it!

DAVID. I know it. What do you tell me what's in your heart.

DULCIE. I can't. Can't you tell me?

DAVID. Guess — what?

DULCIE. Oh, it was horrible to him. There was no home, no love. It seemed like a black hole of home to live with him. But I can't tell you how I feel — I think any man can understand it, only a woman, and not all women, not many women perhaps — but I can't get rid of it. To live with you seems more horrible than that. I cannot! I cannot! I cannot!

DAVID [*very calmly, very sweetly, soothingly*]. Dearest, you mustn't like this. Heaven bear me witness, I will come to me as pure as if I took from your mother's side, as pure as you had never known any kindness from your sister's.

[*Attempting to embrace him*]

DULCIE. Ah! [*Shrinking from him*] Don't I tell you, a man can't understand my feelings.

[*Looks at him half-lovingly, horrified; stands looking at him. A little pause*]

DAVID. [*Same soft, tender tone, persuasive, very low, very sweet*] in a very little while you will get to think of me as if I were your very own — as I shall be; and with you and your sister, and Eddie, and we shall make one happy, one united family. [*Approaching her*]

DULCIE. Ah! that's it. I feel

DAVID [*claspings her again*]. Well

DULCIE. We can't be a family in any way. There's only one way of making a family.

. And that?
E. By the marriage and love
and wife.

. It is marriage I offer you.
you must see there's no future
away from me. Say you'll give
to me willingly. *[Pause]* I
take you else. Give yourself

E *[after a pause]*. I am yours.
No. Give yourself to me —
reely, willingly.

E. Oh! don't you see? I
give you myself — a thousand
I could. What is there in me
worth giving, or worth your
ow?

. Everything, everything. Give
to me!

E. If I give you myself I
the last four years with me.
part of me. I shall only feel
an never get rid of them. I
get rid of them. Every time
me I shall see him beside us!
t! I cannot! I cannot! I

*[Pause. EDDIE looks in at win-
dow]*

Ho, ho, Davy! Ho, ho!
are!

E *[goes to window, goes up to
sister and Rosy, are they
?]*

[pointing down below]. Quite
ere they are. Look alive.
We've no time to waste. I
ready in a twinkling. I'm
ool, and half a wise man just
a two minutes I shall be in my
ases — or in as many as I've
d then — *[Passes by]*

. *[To DULCIE]* Dulcie, your
here. Tell her that henceforth
my wife.

E. I am your slave, your dog,
thing! Take me if you will —
! But kill me after. If you
hall kill myself.

*[enters at door, stands for a mo-
looking at one and then at the
]*

. Dulcie.

DULCIE goes to her, saying,
"Nell"]

E. Rosy — where is she?

[pointing off]. She's there.
is going. HELEN stops her]
look at you. *[DULCIE looks*

frankly at her. HELEN smiles, kisses
her] Go to your baby. *[Exit DULCIE.*
HELEN shuts the door after DULCIE]
You've taken her from him?

[DAVID nods]

HELEN. For good and all?

DAVID. For good and all.

HELEN. Why have you brought her
here?

DAVID. To make her my wife.

HELEN. Your wife? That is im-
possible unless —

DAVID. Unless?

HELEN. Unless her husband divorces
her and takes her child from her.

DAVID. I've won her from him, her
and the child. Don't come between
us. Give them to me!

HELEN *[stops him]*. She is not mine
to give. She is not yours to take.
Your brother tells me you're going on
this expedition to Africa this morning.

DAVID. I'm not going.

HELEN. Not going? But you have
looked forward to it all your life!

DAVID. I've wasted all my life in
such dreams and shadows as work and
duty. What has it availed me? Now
I see one chance of happiness before
me, don't take it from me! Give them
to me! *[She stops him]* I will have
them!

[EDDIE enters dressed ready to start]

EDDIE. Davy, old boy, look alive!
The men have got everything on the
mules. We've not a moment to waste.

DAVID. I'm not going.

EDDIE. Not going? But they are
all waiting for us. If we don't go, all
the expeditions everywhere will be a
failure. Davy, you aren't going to sell
them all like a — like a — They'll call
you a — well, you fill in the word.

DAVID. I'm not going.

EDDIE. But what excuse can we
make?

DAVID. Any excuse you like — I've
changed my mind.

HELEN *[with quiet sarcasm]*. Is that
a good excuse for a soldier to make just
as he's ordered into battle?

DAVID. I'm not a soldier.

HELEN. Yes, you are. We are all
soldiers on this earth, bound to be loyal
to every one of our comrades, bound
to obey the great rules of life, whether
they are easy or hard. Yes, and all the
more bound when they are hard, when
they may cost us our very life. You'll

go — you'll go, and leave her to me and Rosy?

DAVID. I love her! I love her!

HELEN. Then save her for her child. Save her to be a good mother to that little helpless creature she has brought into the world, so that when her girl grows up and she has to guide her, she'll not have to say to her child, "You can give yourself to this man, and if you don't like him you can give yourself to another, and to another, and so on. It doesn't matter. It was what I did!"

DAVID [*same tone*]. I love her! I love her! I love her! You sha'n't reason me out of my happiness!

HELEN [*stopping him*]. I can't reason at all. I can only feel, and I know my instinct is right. I know the woman who gives herself to another man while her husband is alive betrays her sex, and is a bad woman.

DAVID. I love her! I love her!

[*Going towards door*]

HELEN [*stopping him*]. Then make your love the best thing in her life, and the best thing in yours. You have loved her so well. You have made so many sacrifices for her. Make this one last sacrifice. Keep her pure for her child.

EDDIE. That's God's voice speaking to you now, Davy.

[DULCIE enters very quietly, looking off]

DULCIE. [*To DAVID*] She's asleep. Go and look at her.

[*Exit DAVID. DULCIE is about to follow. HELEN stops her*]

HELEN. Dulcie.

DULCIE. What?

HELEN. He's given his word to his comrades. Don't make him play the coward.

[DAVID re-enters, much calmer]

DAVID. Miss Larondie, I'll write to you from Marseilles. I have left everything in order for her. If by any chance I should not return —

DULCIE. Ah! [*Goes to him*]

DAVID. Take care of her while I'm away.

DULCIE. But if you do not return?

DAVID [*very calm, very bitter, very tender, with a little smile*]. Then — we shall have played our parts well in this little puppet-show, shall we not? Don't cry, my dear, why should you? If I were a soldier, you would tell me to go. We shall not be absent from each other

long. Don't cry, dear. It's not to go, Dulcie. Be brave. Tell her to go.

DULCIE [*bows her head*]. Go.

DAVID [*going from her some distance*]. I've played this great game of life like a fool, as men would say. Perhaps I've played the great game of life like a shadow. If we are sacrificing ourselves, a shadow we are only doing what the best creatures have done before. If duty is reality, we have done our duty. Right — wrong — duty — they are all shadows, but my love for you is real. [*DULCIE is sobbing, he comes back*] Hush! Hush, dear! We shall never know satiety. Our love will never grow stale and commonplace, Dulcie, we've only thrown away the husks. We've kept the immortal part of our love — if there is an immortal part. Look! this is my wedding ring. [*Taking a very tiny ring from his little finger*] She gave it to me as she was dying. It has never left my finger since. I give it in exchange for the one I took from you. Give me your hand. [*DULCIE takes it*] With this ring I thee wed. As she who bore me was pure, so I leave you pure, dear. Kiss me once — I've been sacred! [*She kisses him*] Go. No, stay. [*Pours out a glass of wine, gives it to her*] Drink with me. I take the glass, drinks some of it, then takes it from her, drains it, dashes the glass on the floor, where it is shattered into atoms; he then turns very brightly and gaily to EDDIE] Now Eddie, work!

EDDIE. Ready, big brother!

DAVID. [*To DULCIE*] In six months from now, come to meet me, my dear, and bring our child. Or, it may be a little later — but come and meet my wife — a little later.

DULCIE. Where?

DAVID. In that little star in Aldebaran. All's real there.

[*Exeunt EDDIE and DAVID through window*]

CURTAIN

[*If curtain is called up, show a picture of DAVID outside the window, in the full morning sunlight, the morning covered with snow behind him. EDDIE is beside him drawing away*]

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

(1895)

BY OSCAR WILDE

OSCAR WILDE

(1856-1900)

He was the epitome of the *fin de siècle* spirit, and the *fin de siècle* spirit was a Wilde himself was a pose; and his art, however much it may have been a form and beautiful in expression, was, likewise, a pose. Critics have said that the sincerity which should have gone into his art was put into his art. Wilde's sincerity was of the self-indulgent kind, and his pose gave pleasure to himself, rather than covered any real tragedy of the soul. One might readily read Wilde's life by the antithetical demands made by him upon it. For instance he said:

Two great turning-points of my life were when my father sent me to Oxford, and when Society sent me to prison.

It is true, in so far as both events resulted in the exact soundings of Wilde's art. While he was at Oxford he came under the influence of Ruskin, and then learned of art and what he then sensed of socialism proved of varying influence in the years to follow.

After having served his term in prison, and after having poured his repentance in "De Profundis", Wilde, still addicted to the brilliant phrase, for the first time sought brilliancy to cover the tragedy of a broken life.

Representative of a period in English life and letters, interesting because of its consequence, because of its studied freedom which seems to have been wholly to break through the shams of Victorian prudishness. The consequence, this period of art and of literature was essentially one of neuroticism, not the entire censure of Max Nordau, but still having its roots deep down in the nervous tissue which Max Nordau's scientific observation unerringly indicated. The Maeterlinck of this same period, in France, surrounded himself with a group of young men who burned themselves out in their art, and openly sought society. But Maeterlinck escaped the fumes which rose from the mood of the time and came out into a healthier atmosphere. Oscar Wilde, under the same influences, succumbed to the mood which was not a new creation in itself, but which was a direct reflection of the mood of his life. Gaining for himself as he did, the reputation of being the most brilliant exponent of what was called the "fleshly school of literature", Oscar Wilde infused into the British drama a brilliancy which it had not known since the days of Sheridan. Its brilliancy all the more to be accounted a distinct contribution, because it rested upon an unerring sense of life which Oscar Wilde had to such an extent acted upon himself. He wrote in "De Profundis":

I had genius, a distinguished name, high social position, brilliancy, intellectual daring: I made art a philosophy and philosophy an art: I altered the

minds of men and the colours of things: there was nothing I said or did that did not make people wonder. I took the drama, the most objective known to art, and made of it as personal a mode of expression as the lyric, the sonnet; at the same time I widened its range and enriched its character. Drama, novel, poem in prose, poem in rhyme, subtle or fantastic dialogue, whatever I touched, I made beautiful in a new mode of beauty: to myself I gave what is false no less than what is true as its rightful province. I showed that the false and the true are merely forms of intellectual existence. I treated art as the supreme reality and life as a mere mode of fiction. I awoke the imagination of my century so that it created myth and legend around me. I summed up all systems in a phrase and all existence in an epigram.

Had Oscar Wilde exerted his genuine powers in other directions than in the attempt to sum up existence in an epigram, his name would not in itself conjure up that which is unhealthy in English letters. There is no doubt, as he indicated, that it takes a genius to know how to live; but to burn up one's genius in Wilde's way of living is bound sooner or later to result in disillusionment. Had that genius combined with the talent which he confesses he put into his work, we would have had a greater art than remains to us of Wilde's making.

One of the truest things ever written about him is contained in an epigram by Archibald Henderson. It was to the effect that "the crux of his mania was his faithlessness to the truth that the man who is the lackey of his passion can never become the master of his fate."

A thorough reading of Wilde as a poet, as a novelist, as an essayist, as a dramatist, will only accentuate the undoubted truth that his interest in life was far greater than his interest in art. His taste lay, not in his reticence or reserve, but in passionate self-gratification. There is no more tragic indifference, carelessness and waste than in Oscar Wilde's prostitution of his talent. His tragedy is made all the more poignant by his realization, too late, that his life had been ill-spent. Confession is good for the soul, but Oscar Wilde's confession, "De Profundis", came too late.

The atmosphere which fostered Wilde has been brilliantly treated in Henry James Jackson's "The Eighteen-Nineties."

"The Eighteen-Nineties" [he wrote] were so tolerant of novelty in art and ideas that it would seem as if the declining century wished to make amends for the several decades of intellectual and artistic monotony.

Coming, as he did, in an era of pose, — after he left Oxford, where he had shown his flexibility of spirit and his wide diversity of interest, Wilde began a long career of the worship of beauty. And like all worshippers he became a fanatic. He tried to externalize that worship in peculiarity of expression, to say nothing of peculiarity of dress. How he was received in England is reflected in the comedies and satires of Du Maurier, Burnand, and Gilbert, whose "Patience" is a comedy satirical on the æsthetic movement in the English art of the day. Wilde entered a decadent literary world, after having shown great aptitude for the classic and the serious, and a peculiar interest in the socializing of art, as championed by Ruskin.

To gain some idea of London's attitude toward Wilde in the period of t

one must turn to *Punch* and examine the series of cartoons headed "Nin-piana." The reputation he made for himself in England preceded his first visit to America, whither he went, in 1882, to lecture, and where, on his first visit, he made the startling announcement at the custom-house that he had come to declare except his genius. While in the United States, he lectured in place of being the High Priest of the new *Æstheticism*. When he went to America he was received by De Goncourt, Daudet, Hugo, and Bernhardt. In 1883, Wilde resided in London. And the following year he married Constance Mary Webb, settling in Tite Street, in a house decorated by Whistler. The relation between Wilde and Whistler is one of those strange histories that is an art in itself. Between 1884 and 1892 Wilde wrote "The Picture of Dorian Gray", "The Princess and Other Tales", "The House of Pomegranates", "The Soul of a Man under Socialism", and "Intentions." His dramatic ability was largely developed between the years 1892 and 1895, although in 1882 he had written "The Nihilists", and, in 1891, "The Duchess of Padua." His brilliant plays, however, follow each other in rapid succession. "Lady Windermere's Fan" was given at the St. James's Theatre, on February 22, 1892, by George Alexander. "A Woman of No Importance" was produced by Beerbohm Tree, at the Lyric Theatre, on April 19, 1893. "An Ideal Husband," under the management of Lewis Waller, was given at the Haymarket, on January 3, 1895, and the following month, on February 14, "The Importance of Being Earnest" was performed at the St. James's. His "Salomé", refused in 1893 by the British censor, was produced, in 1894, in Paris, having been written in French for Sarah Bernhardt. His other two dramatic endeavours are fragments, "La Sainte Courtisane" and "Florentine Tragedy."

Wilde would have been a greater dramatic artist had he not taken the work of the theatre so lightly. Reading his plays in succession, one is struck by several dominant characteristics: the carelessness with which the plot is constructed, the quality with which the character is conceived, and the brilliancy with which the whole of the entire dialogue is embroidered with his wit. Structurally, Wilde is no better than the average playwright in the France and the England of the day. We have selected for inclusion in the present volume "The Importance of Being Earnest" because it is more reckless in the youthfulness of its situation, more fantastical in its combination of wit and situation than his other plays. Sometimes, when reading Wilde's dramas, one is impressed by the almost trivial quality with which the dialogue is written, reflective of the French Conversations, — a vogue in the language books of the period. One is also impressed by the irony, on the part of Wilde, to be more interested in his side interpretations, in attempting to relate his dialogue to the characters with which he is dealing. Whether he means to be sincere, as in parts of "Lady Windermere's Fan" and "A Woman of No Importance", one feels the lack of sincerity with which the atmosphere is made. A scoffer at sentimentality, he often fell into the most sentimental traps. One would expect not quite the perfect piece of work "The Importance of Being Earnest" assuredly is, because of the fact that its pivot — upon which the plot moves — is a pun. Wilde's dramatic excellence is uneven and superficial. "He who runs may read" might be changed, in the case of Oscar Wilde, to "who runs, interprets." The larger part of "A Woman of No Importance" is given over to Wilde's trivial commentary on life — an unexpected commentary.

His social satires are intellectual feats. They strike one as being essentially full in their generalizations. Shaw caught the Wilde spirit in "You Never Tell", but the difference between Shaw and Wilde is this: that, whereas the latter flourished during the period known as the Oxford Movement, and during the Victorian era, characterized by the Æsthetic Movement, he was never a passionate believer in either; the consequence being that, however sincerely he may have himself been drawn toward vital forces surrounding him, his reaction toward them was essentially moderate and consequent, if not trivial. On the other hand, Shaw's philosophy is deep-grounded, and however casual his expression of it.

The mere details in the life of Oscar Wilde are too well known to need repeating. If he believed what he said when he wrote to Whistler, — "Be what you are, James; and remain, as I do, incomprehensible. To be great is to be misunderstood," — he had his wish consummated. No man has been more reviled, misrepresented, more under- and over-estimated than Oscar Wilde. He was the victim of a vain shock which did infinite harm to himself, but a great deal of good to the Victorian era. His is the type of genius that will probably become more recognized as time separates it from the pernicious influence of his life. Instinctively he prophesied many things that were to happen in the dramatic world. He was the forerunner of Gordon Craig in his upholding of the "mask." One cannot say that without Wilde, Shaw would not have been; but one can say that had Oscar possessed Shaw's social conscience, his plays would not have rung false. No matter how far we advance in moral questions, there still will remain in the human mind averse a detestation of the "fleshly" in literature, and there seems to be more or less ever a tendency to keep art attached to life rather than to support art for art's sake alone. That is why we still receive a physical repulsion in reading "Salome." It is fundamentally neurotic and cannot be excused in the name of its undervalued art. Therefore, as a dramatist, whatever the limitations of Oscar Wilde's construction, they will live because of their universality of wit.

"Wilde gave English Drama style," says the critic, P. P. Howe, "and English Drama of its sincerity."

But on the whole Wilde's influence has not been very great on the English playwright, however much one may detect his style in Shaw, and note the pervasiveness of his style in some of the comedies of W. Somerset Maugham.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By OSCAR WILDE .

To
ROBERT BALDWIN ROSS
IN APPRECIATION
IN AFFECTION

The acting rights to "The Importance of Being Earnest" are held by Charles Frohman (Inc.), Empire Theatre Building, New York City, to whom application must be made for the right to perform, either by amateurs or professionals.

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I

ALGERNON MONCRIEFF'S FLAT IN HALF MOON STREET, W.

ACT II

THE GARDEN AT THE MANOR HOUSE, WOOLTON.

ACT III

DRAWING-ROOM OF THE MANOR HOUSE, WOOLTON.

TIME — The Present

PLACE — London

CASTS OF INITIAL PERFORMANCES OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

	<i>St. James's Theatre, London, February 14, 1895</i>	<i>Empire Theatre, York, April 22 1895</i>
JOHN WORTHING, J. P., of the Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire	Mr. George Alexander	Mr. Henry Miller
ALGERNON MONCRIEFF, his friend	Mr. Allen Aynesworth	Mr. William Fave
REV. CANON CHASUBLE, D. D., rector of Woolton	Mr. H. H. Vincent	Mr. W. H. Crompton
MERRIMAN, butler to Mr. Worthing	Mr. Frank Dyll	Mr. J. P. Whitman
LANE, Mr. Moncrieff's man- servant	Mr. F. Kinsey Peile	Mr. E. Y. Backus
HON. GWENDOLEN FAIRFAX .	Miss Irene Vanbrugh	Miss Viola Allen
LADY BRACKNELL, her mother .	Miss Rose Leclercq	Miss Ida Vernon
CECILY CARDEW, John Worthing's ward	Miss Evelyn Millard	Miss Agnes Miller
MISS PRISM, her governess . .	Mrs. George Canninge	Miss May Robson

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

ACT I

— Morning-room in ALGERNON'S in Half Moon Street. The room luxuriously and artistically furnished. The sound of a piano is heard in the adjoining room. The ladies are arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, ALGERNON enters]

ALGERNON. Did you hear what I was saying, Lane?

Lane. I didn't think it polite to interrupt you, sir.

ALGERNON. I'm sorry for that, for I don't like to be interrupted. I can play accurately — but I can't play with a wonderful expression. (As the piano is concerned, sentimentality prevails. I keep science for Life.)

Lane. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. And, speaking of the importance of Life, have you got the cucumbers and sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

Lane. Yes, sir.

(Hands them on a salver)

ALGERNON [inspects them, takes two, and puts them down on the sofa]. (Oh! . . .)

Lane. Yes, sir; eight bottles and

ALGERNON. Why is it that at a first-rate establishment the servants never drink the champagne? I only ask for information.

Lane. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often noticed that in married households champagne is rarely of a first-rate

ALGERNON. Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?

Lane. I believe it is a very pleasant thing. I have had very little ex-

perience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

ALGERNON [languidly]. I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

Lane. No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

ALGERNON. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you.

Lane. Thank you, sir.

[Lane goes out]

ALGERNON. Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

[Enter Lane]

Lane. Mr. Ernest Worthing.

[Enter Jack]

[Lane goes out]

ALGERNON. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

Jack. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

ALGERNON [stiffly]. I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock. Where have you been since last Thursday?

Jack [sitting down on the sofa]. In the country.

ALGERNON. (What on earth do you do there?)

Jack [pulling off his gloves]. When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

ALGERNON. And who are the people you amuse?

JACK [*airily*]. Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

ALGERNON. Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

JACK. Perfectly horrid! never speak to one of them.

ALGERNON. How immensely you must amuse them! [*Goes over and takes sandwich*] By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?

JACK. Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to tea?

ALGERNON. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

JACK. How perfectly delightful!

ALGERNON. Yes, that is all very well; but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won't quite approve of your being here.

JACK. May I ask why?

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

JACK. I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

ALGERNON. I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business.

JACK. How utterly unromantic you are!

ALGERNON. I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. (Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.)

JACK. I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. (The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.)

ALGERNON. (Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven)—[JACK puts out his hand to take a sandwich. ALGERNON at once interferes] Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta.

[*Takes one and eats it*]

JACK. Well, you have been eating them all the time.

ALGERNON. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt. [*Takes plate from below*] Have some bread and

butter. The bread and butter Gwendolen. Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

JACK [*advancing to table and helping himself*]. And very good bread and butter it is too.

ALGERNON. Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were alone to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already. You are married to her already, and I think you ever will be.

JACK. Why on earth do you say that?

ALGERNON. Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they like. Girls don't think it right.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense!

ALGERNON. It isn't. It is a plain truth. It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors that one meets all over the place. In the second place I don't give my consent.

JACK. Your consent!

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. And because I allow you to marry her, you will have to clear up the whole question of

[*Rings bell*]

JACK. Cecily! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean, Cecily? I don't know anyone by the name of Cecily.

[*Enter LANE*]

ALGERNON. Bring me that cigarette case Mr. Worthing left in the smoking room the last time he dined here.

LANE. Yes, sir. [*LANE goes*]

JACK. Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? I wish to goodness you would let me know. I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard asking for a reward. I was very nearly offering a reward.

ALGERNON. Well, I wish you would offer one. I happen to be more than usually hard up.

JACK. There is no good offering a large reward now that the thief has been found.

[*Enter LANE with the cigarette case and salver. ALGERNON takes it and examines it*]
LANE goes out]

ALGERNON. I think that is the end of you, Ernest, I must go. [*Opens case and examines it*] How

no matter, for, now that I look at the description inside, I find that the name is yours after all.

Of course it's mine. [Moving to the case] You have seen me with it many times, and you have no right to read what is written inside. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to open a private cigarette case.

ALGERNON. Oh! it is absurd to lay down a hard-and-fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn't. It is in half of modern culture to do what one shouldn't read.

I am quite aware of the fact, but I don't propose to discuss modern literature. It isn't the sort of thing one talks of in private. I simply want to see the case back.

ALGERNON. Yes; but this isn't your case. This cigarette case is a present from someone of the name of Ernest, and you said you didn't know the name.

Well, if you want to know, I can tell you it opens to be my aunt.

ALGERNON. Your aunt!

Yes. Charming old lady she lives at Tunbridge Wells. I'll bring it back to me, Algy.

ALGERNON [retreating to back of sofa]. Does she call herself little Algy? Is she your aunt, and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading] 'From my dear Algy with her fondest love.'

ALGERNON [moving to sofa and kneeling]. My dear fellow, what on earth is in that? Some aunts are very tall. That is a mistake. Surely an aunt may be short.

My dear fellow, what on earth is in that? Some aunts are very tall. That is a mistake. Surely an aunt may be short. You think that every aunt should be like your aunt! That is not the case. For Heaven's sake give me the cigarette case.

ALGERNON follows ALGERNON round the room.

ALGERNON. Yes. But why does she call you her uncle. 'From my dear Algy, with her fondest love to Uncle Jack.' There is no mistake. I admit, to an aunt being a mistake, but why an aunt, no matter what size may be, should call her nephew her uncle, I can't quite understand. Besides, your name isn't Ernest; it is Ernest.

It isn't Ernest; it's Jack.

ALGERNON. You have always told me as Ernest. I have introduced everyone as Ernest. You answer

to the name of Ernest. You look as if your name was Ernest. You are the most earnest looking person I ever saw in my life. It is perfectly absurd of your saying that your name isn't Ernest. It's on your cards. Here is one of them. [Taking it from case] 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B 4, The Albany.' I'll keep this as a proof your name is Ernest if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to anyone else. [Puts the card in his pocket]

JACK. Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

ALGERNON. Yes, but that does not account for the fact that your small Aunt Cecily, (who lives at Tunbridge Wells,) calls you her dear uncle. Come, old boy, you had much better have the thing out at once.

JACK. My dear Algy, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression.

ALGERNON. Well, that is exactly what dentists always do. Now, go on! Tell me the whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

JACK. Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

ALGERNON. I'll reveal to you the meaning of that (incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

JACK. Well, produce my cigarette case first.

ALGERNON. Here it is. [Hands cigarette case] Now produce your explanation, and pray make it improbable. [Sits on sofa]

JACK. My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact it's perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his grand-daughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

ALGERNON. Where is that place in the country, by the way?

JACK. That is nothing to you, dear

boy. You are not going to be invited. . . . (I may tell you candidly that the place is not in Shropshire.)

ALGERNON. I suspected that, my dear fellow! (I have Bunburied all over Shropshire on two separate occasions.) Now, go on. Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

JACK. My dear Algy, I don't know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

ALGERNON. The truth is rarely pure and never simple. (Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility.)

JACK. (That wouldn't be at all a bad thing.)

ALGERNON. (Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don't try it. You should leave that to people who haven't been at a University. They do it so well in the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist.) I was quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know.

JACK. What on earth do you mean?

ALGERNON. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. If it wasn't for Bunbury's extraordinary bad health, for instance, I wouldn't be able to dine with you at Willis's to-night, for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

JACK. I haven't asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

ALGERNON. I know. You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. It is very foolish of you.

Nothing annoys people so much as receiving invitations.

JACK. You had much better with your Aunt Augusta.

ALGERNON. I haven't the intention of doing anything of the kind. To begin with, I dined there one day, and once a week is quite enough to dine with one's own relations. In the second place, whenever I do dine at home I am always treated as a member of the family, (and sent down with no woman at all, or two. In the third place, I know perfectly well what will place me next to, to-night, and I will place me next Mary Fawcett, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is very pleasant. Indeed, it is not so decent . . . and that sort of thing enormously on the increase. The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so in public.) Besides, now that you are to be a confirmed Bunburyist, you naturally want to talk to your Bunburying. I want to tell you some rules.

JACK. I'm not a Bunburyist. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am bound to kill my brother, indeed I think I shall kill him in any case. Cecily is too much interested in him. He is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr. . . . your invalid friend who has the name.

ALGERNON. Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be glad to know Bunbury. (A man never marries without knowing Bunbury. It is a very tedious time of it.)

JACK. That is nonsense. If I had a charming girl like Gwendolen, I should be the only girl I ever saw in my life. I would marry, I certainly would marry, to know Bunbury.

ALGERNON. Then your wife will be dead. (You don't seem to realise, that a married life three is company and none.)

JACK [sententiously]. That, my young friend, is the theory that the corrupt French drama has been expounding for the last fifty years.

ALGERNON. Yes; and that

English home has proved in time.)

For Heaven's sake, don't try to be practical. It's perfectly easy to be

NON. My dear fellow, it isn't anything now-a-days. There's a sort of beastly competition about. [A sound of an electric bell is heard] It must be Aunt Augusta. Relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner. Now, if I wait out of the way for ten minutes, you can have an opportunity of going to Gwendolen, may I tell you to-night at Willis's?

I suppose so, if you want to. NON. Yes, but you must be careful about it. I hate people who are serious about meals. It is so tiresome of them.

[Enter LANE]

Lady Bracknell and Miss

NON goes forward to meet them.

LADY BRACKNELL and GWENDOLEN

BRACKNELL. Good afternoon, Algernon, I hope you are behaving

NON. I'm feeling very well, thank you, Augusta.

BRACKNELL. That's not quite the same thing. In fact the two things are very far apart.

NON. JACK and bows to him with a very coldness

NON. [To GWENDOLEN] Dear Gwendolen, you are smart!

GWENDOLEN. I am always smart! Mr. Worthing?

You're quite perfect, Miss

GWENDOLEN. Oh! I hope I am not too late. I would leave no room for detours, and I intend to develop in sections

GWENDOLEN and JACK sit down together in the corner

BRACKNELL. I'm sorry if we are late, Algernon, but I was so late, I had to call on dear Lady Harbury. She has been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so old. She looks quite twenty years old. And now I'll have a cup of tea. One of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

NON. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [Goes over to tea-table]

LADY BRACKNELL. Won't you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN. Thanks, mamma, I'm quite comfortable where I am.

ALGERNON [picking up empty plate in horror]. Good Heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

LANE [gravely]. There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. I went down twice.

ALGERNON. No cucumbers!

LANE. No, sir. Not even for ready money.

ALGERNON. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. [Goes out]

ALGERNON. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

LADY BRACKNELL. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

ALGERNON. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

LADY BRACKNELL. It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [ALGERNON crosses and hands tea] Thank you. I've quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It's delightful to watch them.

ALGERNON. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

LADY BRACKNELL [frowning]. I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. (Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.)

ALGERNON. It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [Exchanges glances with JACK] They seem to think I should be with him.

LADY BRACKNELL. It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

ALGERNON. Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

LADY BRACKNELL. Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind

whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. (I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailments goes.) I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when everyone has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

ALGERNON. I'll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he'll be all right by Saturday. Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk. But I'll run over the programme I've drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

LADY BRACKNELL. Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. [*Rising, and following ALGERNON*] I'm sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

GWENDOLEN. Certainly, mamma.

[*LADY BRACKNELL and ALGERNON go into the music-room, GWENDOLEN remains behind*]

JACK. Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. Pray don't talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me so nervous.

JACK. I do mean something else.

GWENDOLEN. I thought so. In fact, I am never wrong.

JACK. And I would like to be allowed

to take advantage of Lady Bracknell's temporary absence . . .

GWENDOLEN. I would certainly advise you to do so. Mamma has just come of coming back suddenly into the room that I have often had to speak about.

JACK [*nervously*]. Miss Fairfax, since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have never met since . . . I met you.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, I am quite sure of the fact. And I often wish to say so in public, at any rate, you had better be demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. [*JACK looks in amazement*] We live, as I have just known, Mr. Worthing, in an age of facts. The fact is constantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reached the provincial papers. I am told: and my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name which inspires absolute confidence. I remember Algernon first mentioned it, and that he had a friend called Ernest. I knew I was destined to love you.

JACK. You really love me, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN. Passionately!

JACK. Darling! You don't mean how happy you've made me.

GWENDOLEN. My own Ernest!

JACK. But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

GWENDOLEN. But your name is Ernest.

JACK. Yes, I know it is. I was supposing it was something else? I mean to say you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

GWENDOLEN [*glibly*]. Ah! I have clearly a metaphysical speculation, like most metaphysical speculations, with very little reference at all to the facts of real life, as we know them.

JACK. Personally, darling, to be quite candidly, I don't much care about the name of Ernest . . . I think the name suits me at all.

GWENDOLEN. It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a character of its own. It produces vibrations.

JACK. Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are no other much nicer names. I think of, for instance, a charming name,

DOLEN. Jack? . . . No, there is little music in the name Jack, all, indeed. It does not thrill. It gives absolutely no vibrations. I have known several Jacks, and without exception, were more comically plain. (Besides, Jack is a synonym for domesticity for John! And any woman who is married to a man named Jack—) (She would probably not be allowed to know the entrance of a single moment's peace.) The only really safe name is

Gwendolen, I must get christened once—I mean we must get christened at once. There is no time to

DOLEN. Married, Mr. Worthing.

[astounded]. Well . . . surely. I know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were absolutely indifferent to me.

DOLEN. I adore you. But you have proposed to me yet. Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched

Well . . . may I propose to

DOLEN. I think it would be a favorable opportunity. And to avoid any possible disappointment, I think it only fair to tell you frankly beforehand that I am determined to accept you.

Gwendolen!

DOLEN. Yes, Mr. Worthing, I have you got to say to me?

You know what I have got to say to you.

DOLEN. Yes, but you don't

Gwendolen, will you marry me? [Goes on his knees]

DOLEN. Of course I will, darling. How long you have been about me, I am afraid you have had very much experience in how to propose.

My own one, I have never known anyone in the world but you.

DOLEN. Yes, but men often learn by practice. I know my own Gerald does. All my girl friends tell me so. What wonderfully good eyes you have, Ernest! They are, quite blue. I hope you will look at me just like that, especially when there are other people

[Enter LADY BRACKNELL]

LADY BRACKNELL. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

GWENDOLEN. Mamma! [He tries to rise; she restrains him] I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

LADY BRACKNELL. Finished what, may I ask?

GWENDOLEN. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

[They rise together]

LADY BRACKNELL. Pardon me, you are not engaged to anyone. When you do become engaged to someone, I, (or your father, should his health permit him,) will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself. . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

GWENDOLEN [reproachfully]. Mamma!

LADY BRACKNELL. In the carriage, Gwendolen! [GWENDOLEN goes to the door. She and JACK blow kisses to each other behind LADY BRACKNELL's back. LADY BRACKNELL looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round] Gwendolen, the carriage!

GWENDOLEN. Yes, mamma.

[Goes out, looking back at JACK]

LADY BRACKNELL [sitting down]. You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil]

JACK. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

LADY BRACKNELL [pencil and note-book in hand]. I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

JACK. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

LADY BRACKNELL. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There

are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

JACK. Twenty-nine.

LADY BRACKNELL. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

JACK [after some hesitation]. I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. (The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square.) What is your income?

JACK. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

LADY BRACKNELL [makes a note in her book]. In land, or in investments?

JACK. In investments, chiefly.

LADY BRACKNELL. That is satisfactory. (What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.)

JACK. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I believe; but I don't depend on that for my real income. (In fact, as far as I can make out, the poachers are the only people who make anything out of it.)

LADY BRACKNELL. A country house! (How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards.) You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

JACK. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square, but it is let by the year to Lady Bloxham. Of course, I can get it back whenever I like, at six months' notice.

LADY BRACKNELL. Lady Bloxham? I don't know her.

JACK. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ah, now that is no guarantee of respectable character. What number in Grosvenor Square?

JACK. 149.

LADY BRACKNELL [shaking her head]. The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, it could easily be altered.

JACK. Do you mean the fashionable side?

LADY BRACKNELL [sternly]. If it is necessary, I presume. (What about politics?)

JACK. Well, I am afraid I have none. I am a Liberal Unionist.

LADY BRACKNELL. Oh, they call them Tories. They dine with us. Or, at the evening, at any rate. Now to matters. Are your parents living?

JACK. I have lost both my parents.

LADY BRACKNELL. Both? . . . seems like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. (Was he born in wealth? Radical papers call the purple of birth a mere chance, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?)

JACK. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell said I had lost my parents. It may be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me. I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

LADY BRACKNELL. Found!

JACK. The late Mr. Thomas Cardigan (an old gentleman of a very charming and kindly disposition) found me and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.

LADY BRACKNELL. Where did you find this charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort?

JACK [gravely]. In a hand-bag.

LADY BRACKNELL. A hand-bag?

JACK [very seriously]. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag, somewhat large, black leather hand-bag with handles to it — an ordinary hand-bag in fact.

LADY BRACKNELL. In what hand-bag did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardigan come across this ordinary hand-bag?

JACK. In the cloak-room at Victoria Station. It was given to him in exchange for his own.

BRACKNELL. The cloak-room
ia Station?

Yes. The Brighton line.

BRACKNELL. The line is im-
Mr. Worthing, I confess I
what bewildered by what you
told me. To be born, or at
bred, in a hand-bag, whether
handles or not, seems to me to
a contempt for the ordinary
of family life that remind
the worst excesses of the French
on. And I presume you know
that unfortunate movement led
for the particular locality in
the hand-bag was found, (a cloak-
railway station might serve to
social indiscretion — has prob-
eed, been used for that purpose
ow — but it could hardly be
as an assured basis for a
d position in good society.

May I ask you then what you
vise me to do? I need hardly
uld do anything in the world
Gwendolen's happiness.

BRACKNELL. I would strongly
ou, Mr. Worthing, to try and
ome relations as soon as possi-
to make a definite effort to
at any rate one parent, of
k, before the season is quite

Well, I don't see how I could
manage to do that. I can
the hand-bag at any moment.
ny dressing-room at home. I
ink that should satisfy you,
cknell.

BRACKNELL. Me, sir! What
do with me? You can hardly
that I and Lord Bracknell
ream of allowing our only
— a girl brought up with the
are — to marry into a cloak-
d form an alliance with a
Good morning, Mr. Worthing!
ADY BRACKNELL sweeps out in
majestic indignation]

Good morning! [ALGERNON
other room, strikes up the Wed-
ch. JACK looks perfectly furious
o the door] For goodness' sake
y that ghastly tune, Algy!
ic you are!

ic stops and ALGERNON enters
cheerily]

NON. Didn't it go off all
boy? You don't mean to
adolen refused you? I know
y she has. She is always re-

fusing people. I think it is most ill-
natured of her.

JACK. Oh, Gwendolen is as right as
a trivet. As far as she is concerned, we
are engaged. Her mother is perfectly
unbearable. Never met such a Gorgon
. . . I don't really know what a Gorgon
is like, but I am quite sure that Lady
Bracknell is one. In any case, she is a
monster, without being a myth, which
is rather unfair. . . . I beg your par-
don, Algy, I suppose I shouldn't talk
about your own aunt in that way before
you.

ALGERNON. My dear boy, I love
hearing my relations abused. It is the
only thing that makes me put up with
them at all. Relations are simply a
tedious pack of people, who haven't got
the remotest knowledge of how to live,
nor the smallest instinct about when to
die.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense!

ALGERNON. It isn't!

JACK. Well, I won't argue about
the matter. You always want to argue
about things.

ALGERNON. That is exactly what
things were originally made for,

JACK. Upon my word, if I thought
that, I'd shoot myself . . . [A pause]
You don't think there is any chance of
Gwendolen becoming like her mother in
about a hundred and fifty years, do
you, Algy?

ALGERNON. All women become like
their mothers. That is their tragedy.
No man does. That's his.

JACK. Is that clever?

ALGERNON. It is perfectly phrased!
and quite as true as any observation in
civilised life should be.

JACK. I am sick to death of clever-
ness. Everybody is clever now-a-days.
You can't go anywhere without meeting
clever people. The thing has become
an absolute public nuisance. I wish to
goodness we had a few fools left.

ALGERNON. We have.

JACK. I should extremely like to
meet them. What do they talk about?

ALGERNON. The fools? Oh! about
the clever people, of course.

JACK. What fools!

ALGERNON. By the way, did you
tell Gwendolen the truth about your
being Ernest in town, and Jack in the
country?

JACK [in a very patronising manner]
My dear fellow, the truth isn't quite
the sort of thing one tells to a nice,

sweet, refined girl. What extraordinary ideas you have about the way to behave to a woman!

ALGERNON. The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her, if she is pretty, and to someone else if she is plain.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense.

ALGERNON. What about your brother? What about the profligate Ernest?

JACK. Oh, before the end of the week I shall have got rid of him. I'll say he died in Paris of apoplexy. Lots of people die of apoplexy, quite suddenly, don't they?

ALGERNON. Yes, but it's hereditary, my dear fellow. It's a sort of thing that runs in families. You had much better say a severe chill.

JACK. You are sure a severe chill isn't hereditary, or anything of that kind?

ALGERNON. Of course it isn't!

JACK. Very well, then. My poor brother Ernest is carried off suddenly in Paris, by a severe chill. That gets rid of him.

ALGERNON. But I thought you said that . . . Miss Cardew was a little too much interested in your poor brother Ernest? Won't she feel his loss a good deal?

JACK. Oh, that is all right. Cecily is not a silly, romantic girl, I am glad to say. She has got a capital appetite, goes long walks, and pays no attention at all to her lessons.

ALGERNON. I would rather like to see Cecily.

JACK. I will take very good care you never do. She is excessively pretty, and she is only just eighteen.

ALGERNON. Have you told Gwendolen yet that you have an excessively pretty ward who is only just eighteen?

JACK. Oh! one doesn't blurt these things out to people. Cecily and Gwendolen are perfectly certain to be extremely great friends. I'll bet you anything you like that half an hour after they have met, they will be calling each other sister.

ALGERNON. Women only do that when they have called each other a lot of other things first. Now, my dear boy, if we want to get a good table at Willis's, we really must go and dress. Do you know it is nearly seven?

JACK [*irritably*]. Oh! it always is nearly seven.

ALGERNON. Well, I'm hungry.

JACK. I never knew you weren't. . . .

ALGERNON. (What shall we dinner? Go to a theatre?)

JACK. (Oh, no! I loathe lis

ALGERNON. Well, let us go to the Club?

JACK. Oh, no! I hate talk

ALGERNON. Well, we must go round to the Empire at ten?

JACK. Oh, no! I can't bear at things. It is so silly.

ALGERNON. Well, what shall we do?

JACK. Nothing!

ALGERNON. It is awfully hard doing nothing. However, I do not see what hard work where there is no object of any kind.

[*Enter LANE*]

LANE. Miss Fairfax.

[*Enter GWENDOLEN. LANE*

ALGERNON. Gwendolen, my dear word!

GWENDOLEN. Algy, kindly come back. I have something particular to say to Mr. Worthing.

ALGERNON. Really, Gwendolen, don't think I can allow this at present.

GWENDOLEN. Algy, you must adopt a strictly immoral attitude towards life. You are not strong enough to do that.

[*ALGERNON retires to the*

JACK. My own darling!

GWENDOLEN. Ernest, we must be married. From the expression of mamma's face I fear we need. Few parents now-a-days pay regard to what their children say. The old-fashioned respect for parents is fast dying out. Whatever I ever had over mamma, I lost at the age of three. But although I can prevent us from becoming engaged, wife, and I may marry some one else, and marry often, nothing that I possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you.

JACK. Dear Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN. The story of my romantic origin, as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing effect, has naturally stirred the deeper feelings of my nature. Your Christianity has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes me exquisitely incomprehensible

town address at the Albany, I
What is your address in the
y?

THE MANOR HOUSE, WOOLTON,
DORSETSHIRE.

[ALGERNON, who has been carefully
listening, smiles to himself, and
writes the address on his shirt-
cuff. Then picks up the Rail-
way Guide]

GWENDOLEN. There is a good postal
I suppose? It may be neces-
sary to do something desperate. That,
however, will require serious considera-
tion. I will communicate with you

my own one!

GWENDOLEN. How long do you re-
main in town?

Until Monday.

GWENDOLEN. Good! Algy, you may
return now.

ALGERNON. Thanks, I've turned
already.

GWENDOLEN. You may also ring the

bell. You will let me see you to-
morrow, my own darling?

GWENDOLEN. Certainly.

[To LANE, who now enters] I
will send Miss Fairfax out.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, sir.

[JACK and GWENDOLEN go off.]

LANE presents several letters on
a salver to ALGERNON. It is to
be surmised that they are bills, as
ALGERNON, after looking at the
envelopes, tears them up]

ALGERNON. [A glass of sherry, Lane.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. To-morrow, Lane, I'm
returning to Bunbury.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. I shall probably not be
back until Monday. You can put up
fresh clothes, my smoking jacket,
and the Bunbury suits . . .

GWENDOLEN. Yes, sir. [Handing sherry]

ALGERNON. I hope to-morrow will
be a fine day, Lane.

GWENDOLEN. It never is, sir.

ALGERNON. Lane, you're a perfect
fool.

GWENDOLEN. I do my best to give satis-
faction, sir.

[Enter JACK. LANE goes off]

JACK. There's a sensible, intellectual
girl, the only girl I ever cared for in
my life. [ALGERNON is laughing im-

moderately] What on earth are you
so amused at?

ALGERNON. Oh, I'm a little anxious
about poor Bunbury, that is all.

JACK. If you don't take care, your
friend Bunbury will get you into a
serious scrape some day.

ALGERNON. I love scrapes. They
are the only things that are never
serious.

JACK. Oh, that's nonsense, Algy.
You never talk anything but nonsense.

ALGERNON. Nobody ever does.

[JACK looks indignantly at him,
and leaves the room, ALGERNON
lights a cigarette, reads his shirt-
cuff and smiles]

ACT-DROP

ACT II

SCENE. — Garden at the Manor House.

A flight of gray stone steps leads up
to the house. The garden, an old-
fashioned one, full of roses. Time
of year, July. Basket chairs, and a
table covered with books, are set under
a large yew tree.

[MISS PRISM discovered seated at the table.

CECILY is at the back watering
flowers]

MISS PRISM [calling]. Cecily, Cecily!
(Surely such a utilitarian occupation as
the watering of flowers is rather Moul-
ton's duty than yours? Especially at
a moment when intellectual pleasures
await you.) Your German grammar is
on the table. Pray open it at page fif-
teen. We will repeat yesterday's lesson.

CECILY [coming over very slowly]. But

I don't like German. It isn't at all a
becoming language. I know perfectly
well that I look quite plain after my
German lesson.

MISS PRISM. Child, you know how
anxious your guardian is that you
should improve yourself in every way.
He laid particular stress on your Ger-
man, as he was leaving for town yester-
day. Indeed, he always lays stress on
your German when he is leaving for
town.

CECILY. Dear Uncle Jack is so very
serious! Sometimes he is so serious
that I think he cannot be quite well.

MISS PRISM [drawing herself up].
Your guardian enjoys the best of health,
and his gravity of demeanour is es-

pecially to be commended in one so comparatively young as he is. I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

CECILY. I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.

MISS PRISM. Cecily! I am surprised at you. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man, his brother.

CECILY. I wish Uncle Jack would allow that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. I am sure you certainly would. You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much.

[CECILY begins to write in her diary]

MISS PRISM [shaking her head]. I do not think that even I could produce any effect on a character that according to his own brother's admission is irretrievably weak and vacillating. Indeed I am not sure that I would desire to reclaim him. I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows so let him reap. You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don't see why you should keep a diary at all.

CECILY. I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down I should probably forget all about them.

MISS PRISM. Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

CECILY. Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened. I believe that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that Mudie sends us.

MISS PRISM. Do not speak slightly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.

CECILY. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.

MISS PRISM. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.

CECILY. I suppose so. But very unfair. And was your novel published?

MISS PRISM. Alas! no. The script unfortunately was abandoned. I use the word in the sense of mislaid. To your work, child, speculations are profitless.

CECILY [smiling]. But I have Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

MISS PRISM [rising and approaching]. Dr. Chasuble! This is indeed a pleasure.

[Enter CANON CHASUBLE]

CHASUBLE. And how are you this morning? Miss Prism, you are well, I trust, well?

CECILY. Miss Prism has been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

MISS PRISM. Cecily, I have never mentioned anything about a letter.

CECILY. No, dear Miss Prism, I don't know that, but I felt instinctively that you had a headache. Indeed I have been thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, when the Rector called.

CHASUBLE. I hope, Cecily, that you are not inattentive.

CECILY. Oh, I am afraid I am.

CHASUBLE. That is strange. I am fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her every word. [MISS PRISM glares] I speak metaphorically. — My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, has not returned from his walk yet?

MISS PRISM. We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

CHASUBLE. Ah yes, he usually spends his Sunday in London. I am not one of those whose sole enjoyment, as, by all accounts, is to be with that fortunate young man, his pupil, Egeria, and her pupil any longer.

MISS PRISM. Egeria? My dear Canon, Lætitia, Doctor.

CHASUBLE [bowing]. A classic education merely, drawn from the best authors. I shall see you again, I doubt not at Evensong?

MISS PRISM. I think, dear Canon, that I will have a stroll with you in the Park. I have a headache after all, and you might do it good.

SUBLE. With pleasure, Miss with pleasure. We might go to the schools and back.

PRISM. That would be desirable. Cecily, you will read your *Economy* in my absence. I expect on the Fall of the Rupee I may omit. It is somewhat too personal. Even these metallic probabilities have their melodramatic side.

(Goes down the garden with Dr.

CHASUBLE]

LY [picks up books and throws them back on table]. Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, German!

MERRIMAN with a card on a silver]

MERRIMAN. Mr. Ernest Worthing just driven over from the station. He brought his luggage with him.

LY [takes the card and reads it]. Ernest Worthing, B 4, The Albany. Uncle Jack's brother! Did I tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. He seemed much disappointed. I mentioned you and Miss Prism were in the house. He said he was anxious to see you privately for a moment.

LY. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose you had better ask the housekeeper about a room for him.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss.

[MERRIMAN goes off]

LY. I have never met any really nice person before. I feel rather nervous. I am so afraid he will not like everyone else.

ALGERNON, very gay and debonnaire]

Miss!

ALGERNON [raising his hat]. You are my cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

LY. You are under some strange impression. I am not little. In fact, I am more than usually tall for my age. [ALGERNON is rather taken aback.] But I am your cousin Cecily.

LY. I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my cousin Ernest.

ALGERNON. Oh! I am not really nervous at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

LY. If you are not, then you

have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

ALGERNON [looks at her in amazement]. Oh! of course I have been rather reckless.

CECILY. I am glad to hear it.

ALGERNON. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

CECILY. I don't think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

ALGERNON. It is much pleasanter being here with you.

CECILY. I can't understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won't be back till Monday afternoon.

ALGERNON. That is a great disappointment. I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. I have a business appointment that I am anxious . . . to miss.

CECILY. Couldn't you miss it anywhere but in London?

ALGERNON. No: the appointment is in London.

CECILY. Well, I know, of course, how important it is not to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, but still I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

ALGERNON. About my what?

CECILY. Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

ALGERNON. I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties at all.

CECILY. I don't think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

ALGERNON. Australia! I'd sooner die.

CECILY. Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

ALGERNON. Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. Yes, but are you good enough for it?

ALGERNON. I'm afraid I'm not that. That is why I want you to reform me.

You might make that your mission, if you don't mind, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. I'm afraid I've no time, this afternoon.

ALGERNON. Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

CECILY. It is rather Quixotic of you. But I think you should try.

ALGERNON. I will. I feel better already.

CECILY. You are looking a little worse.

ALGERNON. That is because I am hungry.

CECILY. How thoughtless of me. I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals. Won't you come in?

ALGERNON. Thank you. Might I have a button-hole first? I never have any appetite unless I have a button-hole first.

CECILY. A Maréchal Niel?

[Picks up scissors]

ALGERNON. No, I'd sooner have a pink rose.

CECILY. Why? [Cuts a flower]

ALGERNON. Because you are like a pink rose, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. I don't think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

ALGERNON. Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [CECILY puts the rose in his button-hole] You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

CECILY. Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

ALGERNON. They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

CECILY. Oh! I don't think I would care to catch a sensible man. I shouldn't know what to talk to him about.

[They pass into the house. MISS PRISM and DR. CHASUBLE return]

MISS PRISM. You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. You should get married. [A misanthrope I can understand — a womanthrope, never!]

CHASUBLE [with a scholar's shudder]. Believe me, I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

MISS PRISM [sententiously]. That is obviously the reason why the Primitive

Church has not lasted up to the day. And you do not seem to dear Doctor, that by persisting in remaining single, a man converts into a permanent public temple. Men should be more careful; celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

CHASUBLE. But is a man not attractive when married?

MISS PRISM. No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

CHASUBLE. And often, I am told, not even to her.

MISS PRISM. That depends on intellectual sympathies of the intellect. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Your flowers are green. [DR. CHASUBLE spoke horticulturally. My life was drawn from fruits.] But Cecily?

CHASUBLE. Perhaps she follows to the schools.

[Enter JACK slowly from the back garden. He is dressed in black mourning, with crêpe hat and black gloves]

MISS PRISM. Mr. Worthington?

CHASUBLE. Mr. Worthington?

MISS PRISM. This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you Monday afternoon.

JACK [shakes MISS PRISM's hand in a tragic manner]. I have returned earlier than I expected. Dr. Chasuble, how are you well?

CHASUBLE. Dear Mr. Worthington, trust this garb of woe does not denote some terrible calamity?

JACK. My brother.

MISS PRISM. More shame to you and extravagance?

CHASUBLE. Still leading him to pleasure?

JACK [shaking his head]. Dead.

CHASUBLE. Your brother is dead?

JACK. Quite dead.

MISS PRISM. What a lesson to him! I trust he will profit by it.

CHASUBLE. Mr. Worthington, accept of my sincere condolence. You will at least the consolation of knowing you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

JACK. Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

CHASUBLE. Very sad, indeed. You will part with him at the end?

No. He died abroad; in fact. I had a telegram last from the manager of the Grand

CHASUBLE. Was the cause of death?

A severe chill, it seems.

PRISM. As a man sows, so he reaps.

CHASUBLE [raising his hand]. Character! Miss Prism, charity! None is perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the doctor take place here?

No. He seemed to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

CHASUBLE. In Paris! [Shakes his head] I fear that hardly points to any particular state of mind at the last. I could no doubt wish me to make a slight allusion to this tragic affliction next Sunday. [JACK takes his hand convulsively] My sermon—the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing. [All sigh] I preached it at harvest celebration christenings, confirmations, on occasions of humiliation and festal days. The first time I delivered it was in the parish hall, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism among the Upper Orders. The vicar, who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies I drew. Ah! that reminds me, you were at those christenings I think, Dr. JACK? I suppose you know how it ended all right? [DR. CHASUBLE is wounded] I mean, of course, you were usually christening, aren't you?

PRISM. It is, I regret to say, the Rector's most constant duties in the parish. I have often spoken to you about classes on the subject. But it doesn't seem to know what thrift is. CHASUBLE. But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? Your brother Ernest, unmarried, was he not?

Oh, yes.

PRISM [bitterly]. People who are only interested for pleasure usually are.

But it is not for any child, Mr. Worthing. I am very fond of children. No! the fact is, I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, if I have nothing better to do.

CHASUBLE. But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

JACK. I don't remember anything about it.

CHASUBLE. But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

JACK. I certainly intend to have. Of course, I don't know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now.

CHASUBLE. Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

JACK. Immersion!

CHASUBLE. You need have no apprehensions. Sprinkling is all that is necessary, or indeed I think advisable. Our weather is so changeable. At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

JACK. Oh, I might trot round about five if that would suit you?

CHASUBLE. Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

JACK. Oh! I don't see much fun in being christened along with other babies. It would be childish. Would half-past five do?

CHASUBLE. Admirably! Admirably! [Takes out watch] And now, dear Mr. Worthing, I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. I would merely beg you not to be too much bowed down by grief. What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

MISS PRISM. This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

[Enter CECILY from the house]

CECILY. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have got on! Do go and change them.

MISS PRISM. Cecily!

CHASUBLE. My child! my child!

[CECILY goes toward JACK; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner]

CECILY. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

JACK. Who?

CECILY. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago.

JACK. What nonsense! I haven't got a brother.

CECILY. Oh, don't say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn't be so heartless as to disown him. I'll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won't you, Uncle Jack?

[Runs back into the house]

CHASUBLE. These are very joyful tidings.

MISS PRISM. After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

JACK. My brother is in the dining-room? I don't know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd.

[Enter ALGERNON and CECILY hand in hand. They come slowly up to JACK]

JACK. Good heavens!

[Motions ALGERNON away]

ALGERNON. Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future.

[JACK glares at him and does not take his hand]

CECILY. Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother's hand?

JACK. Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

CECILY. Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in everyone. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury, whom he goes to visit so often. And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

JACK. Oh! he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

CECILY. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

JACK. Bunbury! Well, I won't have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

ALGERNON. Of course I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that brother John's coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

CECILY. Uncle Jack, if I shake hands with Ernest, I forgive you.

JACK. Never forgive me?

CECILY. Never, never, never.

JACK. Well, this is the last I shall ever do it.

[Shakes hands with Ernest and glares]

CHASUBLE. It's pleasant, to see so perfect a reconciliation. I think we might leave the two together.

MISS PRISM. Cecily, you must stay with us.

CECILY. Certainly, Miss Prism. A little task of reconciliation is no task.

CHASUBLE. You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

MISS PRISM. We must not be too hasty in our judgments.

CECILY. I feel very happy.

[They exit]

JACK. You young scoundrel! You must get out of this place as possible. I don't allow anything here.

[Enter MERRIMAN]

MERRIMAN. I have put Mr. Ernest's things in the room next to yours. I suppose that is all right?

JACK. What?

MERRIMAN. Mr. Ernest's things, sir. I have unpacked it and put it in the room next to your own.

JACK. His luggage?

MERRIMAN. Yes, sir. Trunks, mantel-cases, a dressing-case, boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.

ALGERNON. I am afraid I shall not see him more than a week this time.

JACK. Merriman, order that done at once. Mr. Ernest has been called back to town.

MERRIMAN. Yes, sir.

[Goes back into the room]

ALGERNON. What a fearful fellow, Jack. I have not been called back to town at all.

JACK. Yes, you have.

ALGERNON. I haven't heard from him.

JACK. Your duty as a brother calls you back.

ALGERNON. My duty as a man has never interfered with my duty in the smallest degree.

JACK. I can quite understand that.

ALGERNON. Well, Cecily is

You are not to talk of Miss like that. I don't like it.

NON. Well, I don't like your You look perfectly ridiculous

Why on earth don't you go change? It is perfectly childish deep mourning for a man who y staying for a whole week with our house as a guest. I call it e.

You are certainly not staying for a whole week as a guest or else. You have got to leave the four-five train.

NON. I certainly won't leave ng as you are in mourning. It e most unfriendly. If I were ing you would stay with me, e. I should think it very un- u didn't.

Well, will you go if I change es?

NON. Yes, if you are not too never saw anybody take so res, and with such little result.

Well, at any rate, that is an being always over-dressed re.

NON. If I am occasionally a r-dressed, I make up for it by ays immensely over-educated.

Your vanity is ridiculous, uct an outrage, and your in my garden utterly absurd. , you have got to catch the , and I hope you will have a journey back to town.. This ing, as you call it, has not eat success for you.

[Goes into the house]

NON. I think it has been a cess. I'm in love with Cecily, is everything. [Enter CECILY ck of the garden. She picks up and begins to water the flowers] must see her before I go, and rangements for another Bun- b, there she is.

r. Oh, I merely came back to e roses. I thought you were le Jack.

NON. He's gone to order the for me.

r. Oh, is he going to take a nice drive?

NON. He's going to send me

r. Then have we got to part?

NON. I am afraid so. It's a nful parting.

r. It is always painful to part

from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

ALGERNON. Thank you.

[Enter MERRIMAN]

MERRIMAN. The dog-cart is at the door, sir.

[ALGERNON looks appealingly at CECILY]

CECILY. It can wait, Merriman . . . for . . . five minutes.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss.

[Exit MERRIMAN]

ALGERNON. I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection.

CECILY. I think your frankness does you great credit, Ernest. If you will allow me I will copy your remarks into my diary.

[Goes over to table and begins writing in diary]

ALGERNON. Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?

CECILY. Oh, no. [Puts her hand over it] You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication. When it appears in volume form I hope you will order a copy. But pray, Ernest, don't stop. I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached 'absolute perfection.' You can go on. I am quite ready for more.

ALGERNON [somewhat taken aback]. Ahem! Ahem!

CECILY. Oh, don't cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don't know how to spell a cough.

[Writes as ALGERNON speaks]

ALGERNON [speaking very rapidly]. Cecily, ever since I first looked upon your wonderful and incomparable beauty, I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly.

CECILY. I don't think that you should tell me that you love wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly. Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it?

ALGERNON. Cecily!

[Enter MERRIMAN]

MERRIMAN. The dog-cart is waiting, sir.

ALGERNON. Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour.

MERRIMAN [*looks at CECILY, who makes no sign*] Yes, sir.

[MERRIMAN retires]

CECILY. Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week, at the same hour.

ALGERNON. Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

CECILY. You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

ALGERNON. For the last three months?

CECILY. Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday.

ALGERNON. But how did we become engaged?

CECILY. Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him after all. I dare say it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.

ALGERNON. Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?

CECILY. On the 4th of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree here. The next day I bought this little ring in your name, and this is the little bangle with the true lover's knot I promised you always to wear.

ALGERNON. Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?

CECILY. Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Ernest. It's the excuse I've always given for your leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters.

[*Kneels at table, opens box, and produces letters tied up with blue ribbon*]

ALGERNON. My letters! But my

own sweet Cecily, I have never you any letters.

CECILY. You need hardly me of that, Ernest. I remember too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote three times a week, and often.

ALGERNON. Oh, do let me see Cecily?

CECILY. Oh, I couldn't. They would make you far more excited. [*Replaces box*] The letter I wrote me after I had broken off my engagement are so beautifully badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without a little.

ALGERNON. But was our engagement ever broken off?

CECILY. Of course it was. It was the 22nd of last March. You can see the entry if you like. [*Shows diary*] The day I broke off my engagement with Ernest. I feel it is better to write it down. The weather still continues clear.

ALGERNON. But why on earth do you break it off? What had I done? I had done nothing at all. Cecily, you've very much hurt indeed to have broken it off. Particularly as the weather was so charming.

CECILY. It would hardly be a really serious engagement if it had been broken off at least once. I forgave you before the week was out.

ALGERNON [*crossing to her, and taking her hand*]. What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

CECILY. You dear romantic! [*He kisses her, she puts her hand through his hair*] I hope your hair curls naturally, does it?

ALGERNON. Yes, darling, but I can give you a little help from others.

CECILY. I am so glad.

ALGERNON. You'll never leave our engagement again, Cecily.

CECILY. I don't think I could break it off now that I have actually accepted you. Besides, of course, there is the name of your name.

ALGERNON. Yes, of course.

CECILY. You must not laugh, darling, but it had always been my dream of mine to love some one whose name was Ernest. [*ALGERNON looks at CECILY also*] There is something in that name that seems to inspire confidence. I pity any poor

whose husband is not called

ALGERNON. But, my dear child, do not say you could not love me under some other name?

CECILY. But what name?

ALGERNON. Oh, any name you like — for instance . . .

CECILY. But I don't like the name Algernon.

ALGERNON. Well, my own dear, my loving little darling, I really do not see why you should object to the name of Algernon. It is not at all a vulgar name. In fact, it is rather an aristocratic name. Half of the chaps get into the Bankruptcy Court called Algernon. But seriously, . . . [Moving to her] . . . if my name was Algy, couldn't you love me?

CECILY [rising]. I might respect earnest, I might admire your character, but I fear that I should not be able to give you my undivided attention. ALGERNON. Ahem! Cecily! [Picking up hat] Your Rector here is, I suppose, thoroughly experienced in the details of all the rites and ceremonials of the Church?

CECILY. Oh, yes. Dr. Chasuble is a very learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows.

ALGERNON. I must see him at once for the most important christening — I mean the most important business.

CECILY. Oh!

ALGERNON. I sha'n't be away more than an hour.

CECILY. Considering that we have been engaged since February the 14th, and that I only met you to-day for the first time, I think it is rather hard that you should leave me for so long a time as half an hour. Couldn't you wait twenty minutes?

ALGERNON. I'll be back in no time.

[Kisses her and rushes down the garden]

CECILY. What an impetuous boy! I like his hair so much. I must put it in my proposal in my diary.

[Enter MERRIMAN]

MERRIMAN. A Miss Fairfax has called to see Mr. Worthing. On important business Miss Fairfax

CECILY. Isn't Mr. Worthing in his study?

MERRIMAN. Mr. Worthing went over in the direction of the Rectory some time ago.

CECILY. Pray ask the lady to come out here; Mr. Worthing is sure to be back soon. And you can bring tea.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [Goes out]

CECILY. Miss Fairfax! I suppose one of the many good elderly women who are associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London. I don't quite like women who are interested in philanthropic work. I think it is so forward of them.

[Enter MERRIMAN]

MERRIMAN. Miss Fairfax.

[Enter GWENDOLEN]

[Exit MERRIMAN]

CECILY [advancing to meet her]. Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

GWENDOLEN. Cecily Cardew? [Moving to her and shaking hands] What a very sweet name! Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.

CECILY. How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

GWENDOLEN [still standing up]. I may call you Cecily, may I not?

CECILY. With pleasure!

GWENDOLEN. And you will always call me Gwendolen, won't you?

CECILY. If you wish.

GWENDOLEN. Then that is all quite settled, is it not?

CECILY. I hope so.

[A pause. They both sit down together]

GWENDOLEN. Perhaps this might be a favourable opportunity for my mentioning who I am. My father is Lord Bracknell. You have never heard of papa, I suppose?

CECILY. I don't think so.

GWENDOLEN. Outside the family circle, papa, I am glad to say, is entirely unknown. I think that is quite as it should be. The home seems to me to be the proper sphere for the man. And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? And I don't like that. It makes men

so very attractive. Cecily, mamma, whose views on education are remarkably strict, has brought me up to be extremely short-sighted; it is part of her system; so do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?

CECILY. Oh! not at all, Gwendolen. I am very fond of being looked at.

GWENDOLEN [*after examining CECILY carefully through a lorgnette*]. You are here on a short visit, I suppose.

CECILY. Oh no! I live here.

GWENDOLEN [*severely*]. Really? Your mother, no doubt, or some female relative of advanced years, resides here also?

CECILY. Oh no! I have no mother, nor, in fact, any relations.

GWENDOLEN. Indeed!

CECILY. My dear guardian, with the assistance of Miss Prism, has the arduous task of looking after me.

GWENDOLEN. Your guardian?

CECILY. Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

GWENDOLEN. Oh! It is strange he never mentioned to me that he had a ward. How secretive of him! He grows more interesting hourly. I am not sure, however, that the news inspires me with feelings of unmixed delight. [*Rising and going to her*] I am very fond of you, Cecily; I have liked you ever since I met you! But I am bound to state that now that I know that you are Mr. Worthing's ward, I cannot help expressing a wish you were — well just a little older than you seem to be — and not quite so very alluring in appearance. In fact, if I may speak candidly —

CECILY. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

GWENDOLEN. Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honour. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception. But, even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than Ancient History, supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed, History would be quite unreadable.

CECILY. I beg your pardon, dolen, did you say Ernest?

GWENDOLEN. Yes.

CECILY. Oh, but it is not Mr. Worthing who is my guardian. brother — his elder brother.

GWENDOLEN [*sitting down*]. Ernest never mentioned to me he had a brother.

CECILY. I am sorry to say I have not been on good terms for some time.

GWENDOLEN. Ah! that is all for it. And now that I think of it, I have never heard any man mention his brother. The subject seems so tasteless to most men. Cecily has lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. I have been terrible if any close friend come across a friendship like this, would it not? Of course you are quite sure that it is not Mr. Worthing who is your guardian?

CECILY. Quite sure. [A pause] In fact, I am going to be his.

GWENDOLEN [*enquiringly*]. Your pardon?

CECILY [*rather shy and confused*]. Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it. Our little county newspaper is a chronicle the fact next week Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

GWENDOLEN [*quite politely*]. My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Worthing is engaged to me. My nouncement will appear in the 'Morning Post' on Saturday at the latest.

CECILY [*very politely, rising*]. I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me only ten minutes ago. [*Shows diary*]

GWENDOLEN [*examines diary and her lorgnette carefully*]. It is very curious, for he asked me to marry him yesterday afternoon at five. You would care to verify the fact? I pray do so. [*Produces diary again*] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am bound to have the prior claim.

CECILY. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, that it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to per-

Ernest proposed to you he has changed his mind.

GWENDOLEN [*meditatively*]. If the fellow has been entrapped into foolish promise, I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

CECILY [*thoughtfully and sadly*]. My unfortunate entanglement may have got into, I will never part with him after we are married.

GWENDOLEN. Do you allude to me, Cardew, as an entanglement? I am presumptuous. On an occasion like this it becomes more than a duty to speak one's mind. It is a pleasure.

CECILY. Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Ernest into an entanglement? How dare you? This is for wearing the shallow mask of respectability. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

GWENDOLEN [*satirically*]. I am glad that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres are widely different.

MERRIMAN, followed by the footman. He carries a salver, tablecloth, and plate stand. CECILY is out to retort. The presence of the footman exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe]

MERRIMAN. Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

CECILY [*sternly, in a calm voice*]. Yes, please.

MERRIMAN begins to clear and lay cloth. A long pause.

CECILY and GWENDOLEN glare at each other]

GWENDOLEN. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss?

CECILY. Oh! yes! a great many. The top of one of the hills quite a view. One can see five counties.

GWENDOLEN. Five counties! I don't think I should like that. I hate crowds.

CECILY [*sweetly*]. I suppose that is the life in town?

GWENDOLEN bites her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol]

GWENDOLEN [*looking around*]. Quite a nice garden this is, Miss Cardew.

CECILY. So glad you like it, Miss

GWENDOLEN. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

CECILY. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

GWENDOLEN. Personally I cannot understand how anybody manages to exist in the country, if anybody who is anybody does. The country always bores me to death.

CECILY. Ah! This is what the newspapers call agricultural depression, is it not? I believe the aristocracy are suffering very much from it just at present. It is almost an epidemic amongst them, I have been told. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax?

GWENDOLEN [*with elaborate politeness*]. Thank you. [*Aside*] Detestable girl! But I require tea!

CECILY [*sweetly*]. Sugar?

GWENDOLEN [*superciliously*]. No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more.

[CECILY looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup]

CECILY [*severely*]. Cake or bread and butter?

GWENDOLEN [*in a bored manner*]. Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses now-a-days.

CECILY [*cuts a very large slice of cake, and puts it on the tray*]. Hand that to Miss Fairfax.

[MERRIMAN does so, and goes out with footman. GWENDOLEN drinks the tea and makes a grimace. Puts down cup at once, reaches out her hand to the bread and butter, looks at it, and finds it is cake. Rises in indignation]

GWENDOLEN. You have filled my tea with lumps of sugar, and though I asked most distinctly for bread and butter, you have given me cake. I am known for the gentleness of my disposition, and the extraordinary sweetness of my nature, but I warn you, Miss Cardew, you may go too far.

CECILY [*rising*]. To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machinations of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

GWENDOLEN. From the moment I saw you I distrusted you. I felt that you were false and deceitful. I am never deceived in such matters. My first impressions of people are invariably right.

CECILY. It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in the neighbourhood.

[Enter JACK]

GWENDOLEN [catching sight of him]. Ernest! My own Ernest!

JACK. Gwendolen! Darling!

[Offers to kiss her]

GWENDOLEN [drawing back]. A moment! May I ask if you are engaged to be married to this young lady?

[Points to CECILY]

JACK [laughing]. To dear little Cecily! Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

GWENDOLEN. Thank you. You may.

[Offers her cheek]

CECILY [very sweetly]. I knew there must be some misunderstanding, Miss Fairfax. The gentleman whose arm is at present around your waist is my dear guardian, Mr. John Worthing.

GWENDOLEN. I beg your pardon?

CECILY. This is Uncle Jack.

GWENDOLEN [receding]. Jack! Oh!

[Enter ALGERNON]

CECILY. Here is Ernest.

ALGERNON [goes straight over to CECILY without noticing anyone else]. My own love!

[Offers to kiss her]

CECILY [drawing back]. A moment, Ernest! May I ask you—are you engaged to be married to this young lady?

ALGERNON [looking around]. To what young lady? Good heavens! Gwendolen!

CECILY. Yes! to good heavens, Gwendolen, I mean to Gwendolen.

ALGERNON [laughing]. Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

CECILY. Thank you. [Presenting her cheek to be kissed] You may.

[ALGERNON kisses her]

GWENDOLEN. I felt there was some slight error, Miss Cardew. The gentleman who is now embracing you is my cousin, Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.

CECILY [breaking away from ALGERNON]. Algernon Moncrieff! Oh!

[The two girls move towards each other and put their arms round each other's waist as if for protection]

CECILY. Are you called Algernon?

ALGERNON. I cannot deny.

CECILY. Oh!

GWENDOLEN. Is your name John?

JACK [standing rather proudly]. I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name is certainly John. It has been so for years.

CECILY. [To GWENDOLEN] Deception has been practised of us.

GWENDOLEN. My poor Cecily!

CECILY. My sweet wronged Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN [slowly and sadly]. You will call me sister, will you?

[They embrace. JACK GROANS and goes down]

CECILY [rather brightly]. Just one question I would like to be allowed to ask my guardian.

GWENDOLEN. An admirable question, Mr. Worthing, there is just one question I would like to be permitted to put to you. Where is your brother Ernest? We are both engaged to be married to your brother Ernest. It is a matter of some importance to know where your brother Ernest is at present.

JACK [slowly and hesitatingly]. Gwendolen—Cecily—it is very painful to me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a position, and I am really quite inexperienced in doing anything of the kind. However, I will tell you quite truthfully that I have no brother Ernest, no brother at all. I never had one in my life, and I certainly have the smallest intention of ever having one in the future.

CECILY [surprised]. No brother?

JACK [cheerily]. None!

GWENDOLEN [severely]. He is never a brother of any kind?

JACK [pleasantly]. Never. Of any kind.

GWENDOLEN. I am afraid it is clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to anyone.

CECILY. It is not a very awkward position for a young girl such as myself to find herself in. Is it?

GWENDOLEN. Let us go

They will hardly venture to enter us there.

Y. No, men are so cowardly, hey?

They retire into the house with scornful looks]

This ghastly state of things you call Bunburying, I suppose?

ALGERNON. Yes, and a perfectly natural Bunbury it is. The most natural Bunbury I have ever had.

Well, you've no right what-so Bunbury here.

ALGERNON. That is absurd. One ought to Bunbury anywhere one likes. Every serious Bunburyist knows that.

Serious Bunburyist! Good!

ALGERNON. Well, one must be serious about something, if one wants to enjoy amusement in life. I happen to be serious about Bunburying. What you are serious about I haven't the remotest idea. About everything else I should fancy. You have such a thoroughly trivial nature.

Well, the only small satisfaction in the whole of this wretched life is that your friend Bunbury is exploded. You won't be able to go down to the country quite so often as you used to do, dear Algy. A very good thing too.

ALGERNON. Your brother is a little surly, isn't he, dear Jack? You are able to disappear to London so frequently as your wicked father was. And not a bad thing.

As for your conduct towards Cardew, I must say that your behaviour, in a sweet, simple, innocent girl, is quite inexcusable. To say nothing of the fact that she is my

ALGERNON. I can see no possible objection at all for your deceiving a clever, thoroughly experienced lady like Miss Fairfax. To say nothing of the fact that she is my cousin.

I wanted to be engaged to Cecily, that is all. I love her.

ALGERNON. Well, I simply wanted to be engaged to Cecily. I adore her.

There is certainly no chance of my marrying Miss Cardew.

ALGERNON. I don't think there is much likelihood, Jack, of you and Miss Cecily being united.

JACK. Well, that is no business of yours.

ALGERNON. If it was my business, I wouldn't talk about it. [*Begins to eat muffins*] It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stock-brokers do that, and then merely at dinner parties.

JACK. How you can sit there, calmly eating muffins when we are in this horrible trouble, I can't make out. You seem to me to be perfectly heartless.

ALGERNON. Well, I can't eat muffins in an agitated manner. The butter would probably get on my cuffs. One should always eat muffins quite calmly. It is the only way to eat them.

JACK. I say it's perfectly heartless of your eating muffins at all, under the circumstances.

ALGERNON. When I am in trouble, eating is the only thing that consoles me. Indeed, when I am in really great trouble, as any one who knows me intimately will tell you, I refuse everything except food and drink. At the present moment I am eating muffins because I am unhappy. Besides, I am particularly fond of muffins. [*Rising*]

JACK [*rising*]. Well, that is no reason why you should eat them all in that greedy way.

[*Takes muffins from ALGERNON*]

ALGERNON [*offering tea-cake*]. I wish you would have tea-cake instead. I don't like tea-cake.

JACK. Good heavens! I suppose a man may eat his own muffins in his own garden.

ALGERNON. But you have just said it was perfectly heartless to eat muffins.

JACK. I said it was perfectly heartless of you, under the circumstances. That is a very different thing.

ALGERNON. That may be. But the muffins are the same.

[*He seizes the muffin-dish from JACK*]

JACK. Algy, I wish to goodness you would go.

ALGERNON. You can't possibly ask me to go without having some dinner. It's absurd. I never go without my dinner. No one ever does, except vegetarians and people like that. Besides I have just made arrangements with Dr. Chasuble to be christened at a quarter to six under the name of Ernest.

JACK. My dear fellow, the sooner you give up that nonsense the better.

I made arrangements this morning with Dr. Chasuble to be christened myself at 5.30, and I naturally will take the name of Ernest. Gwendolen would wish it. We can't both be christened Ernest. It's absurd. Besides, I have a perfect right to be christened if I like. There is no evidence at all that I ever have been christened by anybody. I should think it extremely probable I never was, and so does Dr. Chasuble. It is entirely different in your case. You have been christened already.

ALGERNON. Yes, but I have not been christened for years.

JACK. Yes, but you have been christened. That is the important thing.

ALGERNON. Quite so. So I know my constitution can stand it. If you are not quite sure about your ever having been christened, I must say I think it rather dangerous your venturing on it now. It might make you very unwell. You can hardly have forgotten that someone very closely connected with you was very nearly carried off this week in Paris by a severe chill.

JACK. Yes, but you said yourself that a severe chill was not hereditary.

ALGERNON. It usen't to be, I know — but I daresay it is now. Science is always making wonderful improvements in things.

JACK [*picking up the muffin-dish*]. Oh, that is nonsense; you are always talking nonsense.

ALGERNON. Jack, you are at the muffins again! I wish you wouldn't. There are only two left. [*Takes them*] I told you I was particularly fond of muffins.

JACK. But I hate tea-cake.

ALGERNON. Why on earth then do you allow tea-cake to be served up for your guests? What ideas you have of hospitality!

JACK. Algernon! I have already told you to go. I don't want you here. Why don't you go?

ALGERNON. I haven't quite finished my tea yet! and there is still one muffin left.

[*JACK groans and sinks into a chair. ALGERNON still continues eating*]

ACT-DROP

ACT III

SCENE. — *Morning-room at the House.*

[*GWENDOLEN and CECILY at the window, looking out into the street*]

GWENDOLEN. The fact that I did not follow us at once into town, as anyone else would have done, is to me to show that they have some sense of shame left.

CECILY. They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

GWENDOLEN [*after a pause*]. They don't seem to notice us at all. You cough?

CECILY. But I haven't a cough.

GWENDOLEN. They're looking at us. What effrontery!

CECILY. They're approaching us very forward of them.

GWENDOLEN. Let us preserve a dignified silence.

CECILY. Certainly. It's the only thing to do now.

[*Enter JACK, followed by ALGERNON. They whistle some dreadful air from a British opera*]

GWENDOLEN. This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

CECILY. A most distasteful effect.

GWENDOLEN. But we will not first to speak.

CECILY. Certainly not.

GWENDOLEN. Mr. Worthington has something very particular to say. Much depends on your reply.

CECILY. Gwendolen, your sense is invaluable. Mr. Worthington kindly answer me the following question: Why did you pretend to be the guardian's brother?

ALGERNON. In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

CECILY. [*To GWENDOLEN*] That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?

GWENDOLEN. Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

CECILY. I don't. But that will not affect the wonderful beauty of your answer.

GWENDOLEN. True. In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing. Mr. Worthington's explanation can you offer to me? Pretending to have a brother

der that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

Can you doubt it, Miss Fair-

DOLEN. I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to prove them. This is not the morbid German scepticism. [Mou-ECILY] Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially in the matter of the stamp of truth upon it.

Y. I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff said. His presence inspires one with absolute confidence.

DOLEN. Then you think we should forgive them?

Y. Yes. I mean no.

DOLEN. True! I had forgotten that there are principles at stake that must not surrender. Which of us shall tell them? The task is not a light one.

Y. Could we not both speak at the same time?

DOLEN. An excellent idea! I always speak at the same time with my people. Will you take the lead, my dear?

Y. Certainly.

GWENDOLEN *beats time with uplifted finger*

DOLEN AND CECILY *[speaking together]* Your Christian names are insuperable barriers! That is all!

AND ALGERNON *[speaking together]* Our Christian names! Is that all? We are going to be christened to-morrow noon.

DOLEN. *[To JACK]* For my part, I am prepared to do this terrible thing.

I am.

Y. *[To ALGERNON]* To please me, I am ready to face this fearful thing.

NON. I am!

DOLEN. How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! Where the interests of self-sacrifice are concerned, we are infinitely beyond us.

We are.

[Clasps hands with ALGERNON]

Y. They have moments of courage of which we women are absolutely nothing.

DOLEN. *[To JACK]* Darling!

NON. *[To CECILY]* Darling!
They fall into each other's arms

[Enter MERRIMAN. When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation]

MERRIMAN. Ahem! Ahem! Lady Bracknell!

JACK. Good heavens!

[Enter LADY BRACKNELL. The couples separate in alarm. Exit MERRIMAN]

LADY BRACKNELL. Gwendolen! What does this mean?

GWENDOLEN. Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

LADY BRACKNELL. Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately. Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. *[Turns to JACK]* Apprised, sir, of my daughter's sudden flight by her trusty maid, whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, I followed her at once by a luggage train. Her unhappy father is, I am glad to say, under the impression that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a Permanent Income on Thought. I do not propose to undeceive him. Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong. But, of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.

JACK. I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen, Lady Bracknell!

LADY BRACKNELL. You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now, as regards Algermon! . . . Algermon!

ALGERNON. Yes, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

ALGERNON *[stammering]*. Oh! No! Bunbury doesn't live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead.

LADY BRACKNELL. Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die? His death must have been extremely sudden.

ALGERNON *[airily]*. Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

LADY BRACKNELL. What did he die of?

ALGERNON. Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

LADY BRACKNELL. Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity.

ALGERNON. My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out! The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean—so Bunbury died.

LADY BRACKNELL. He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, may I ask, Mr. Worthing, who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

JACK. That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward.

[LADY BRACKNELL bows coldly to CECILY]

ALGERNON. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. I beg your pardon?

CECILY. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL [*with a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down*]. I do not know whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, but the number of engagements that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary enquiry on my part would not be out of place. Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? I merely desire information. Until yesterday I had no idea that there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus.

[JACK looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself]

JACK [*in a clear, cold voice*]. Miss Cardew is the granddaughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149, Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporrán, Fifeshire, N.B.

LADY BRACKNELL. That sounds not unsatisfactory. Three addresses always

inspire confidence, even in travel. But what proof have I of their utility?

JACK. I have carefully perused the Court Guides of the period, and they are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL [*grimly*]. I have known strange errors in that direction.

JACK. Miss Cardew's family connections are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

LADY BRACKNELL. Markby, Markby, and Markby? A firm of the highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Markbys is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. So far I am satisfied.

JACK [*very irritably*]. How excellent of you, Lady Bracknell! If you also in my possession, you will be able to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew's birth, baptism, whooping cough, vaccination, confirmation, the measles; both the German and English variety.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ah! crowded with incident, I see; perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. I am not myself inured to premature experiences. [*Rings at her watch*] Gwendolen! the carriage approaches for our departure. We have not a moment to lose in the matter of form, Mr. Worthing. Better ask you if Miss Cardew has a little fortune?

JACK. Oh! about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the funds. That is all. Good-bye, Lady Bracknell. So pleased to have seen you.

LADY BRACKNELL [*sitting down*]. A moment, Mr. Worthing. A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! Not in the Funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, but that I look at her. Few girls in the present day have any really solid qualities, any of the qualities that improve with time. We live, in fact, to say, in an age of surface. CECILY] Come over here, Cecily. [CECILY goes across] Pretty good. Your dress is sadly simple, and your hair seems almost as Nature has left it. But we can soon improve that. A thoroughly experienced maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. I am a member recommending one to

ancing, and after three months husband did not know her.

[Aside] And after six months knew her.

BRACKNELL [glares at JACK for moments. Then bends, with a smile, to CECILY]. Kindly and, sweet child. [CECILY turns round] No, the side view is want. [CECILY presents her profile] Yes, quite as I expected. Are distinct social possibilities in profile. The two weak points in are its want of principle and of profile. The chin a little dear. Style largely depends on the chin is worn. They are very high, just at present. AL-

GERNON. Yes, Aunt Augusta!

BRACKNELL. There are distinct possibilities in Miss Cardew's

GERNON. Cecily is the sweetest, prettiest girl in the whole And I don't care twopence social possibilities.

BRACKNELL. Never speak dislily of Society, Algernon. Only who can't get into it do that. [CECILY] Dear child, of course you that Algernon has nothing but as to depend upon. But I do prove of mercenary marriages. married Lord Bracknell I had ne of any kind. But I never for a moment of allowing that in my way. Well, I suppose give my consent.

GERNON. Thank you, Aunt Au-

BRACKNELL. Cecily, you may Y [kisses her]. Thank you, Bracknell.

BRACKNELL. You may also me as Aunt Augusta for the

Y. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

BRACKNELL. The marriage, I ad better take place quite soon.

GERNON. Thank you, Aunt Au-

Y. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

BRACKNELL. To speak frankly, t in favour of long engagements. ive people the opportunity of out each other's character before a, which I think is never ad-

I beg your pardon for inter-

rupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Miss Cardew's guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely decline to give.

LADY BRACKNELL. Upon what grounds, may I ask? Algernon is an extremely, I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. He has nothing, but he looks everything. What more can one desire?

JACK. It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, but the fact is that I do not approve at all of his moral character. I suspect him of being untruthful.

[ALGERNON and CECILY look at him in indignant amazement]

LADY BRACKNELL. Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

JACK. I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. This afternoon, during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. Under an assumed name he drank, I've just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, '89; a wine I was specially reserving for myself. Continuing his disgraceful deception, he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. He subsequently stayed to tea, and devoured every single muffin: And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, that he was perfectly well aware from the first that I have no brother, that I never had a brother, and that I don't intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew's conduct to you.

JACK. That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. My own decision, however, is unalterable. I decline to give my consent.

LADY BRACKNELL. [To CECILY] Come here, sweet child. [CECILY goes over] How old are you, dear?

CECILY. Well, I am really only eighteen, but I always admit to twenty when I go to evening parties.

LADY BRACKNELL. You are per-

fectly right in making some slight alteration. Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating. . . . [*In a meditative manner*] Eighteen, but admitting to twenty at evening parties. Well, it will not be very long before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. So I don't think your guardian's consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

JACK. Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, but it is only fair to tell you that according to the terms of her grandfather's will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age till she is thirty-five.

LADY BRACKNELL. That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. Thirty-five is a very attractive age. London society is full of women of the very highest birth who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five ever since she arrived at the age of forty, which was many years ago now. I see no reason why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive at the age you mention than she is at present. There will be a large accumulation of property.

CECILY. Algy, could you wait for me till I was thirty-five?

ALGERNON. Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.

CECILY. Yes, I felt it instinctively, but I couldn't wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It always makes me rather cross. I am not punctual myself, I know, but I do like punctuality in others, and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

ALGERNON. Then what is to be done, Cecily?

CECILY. I don't know, Mr. Moncrieff.

LADY BRACKNELL. My dear Mr. Worthing, as Miss Cardew states positively that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five—a remark which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature—I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

JACK. But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

LADY BRACKNELL [*rising and ing herself up*]. You must be aware that what you propose is the question.

JACK. Then a passionate celebration that any of us can look forward to.

LADY BRACKNELL. That is my destiny I propose for Gwendolen. Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [*Pulls out her watch*] dear; [*GWENDOLEN rises*] we have already missed five, if not six, train-misses any more might expose me to comment on the platform.

[*Enter DR. CHASUBLE*]

CHASUBLE. Everything is ready for the christenings.

LADY BRACKNELL. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

CHASUBLE [*looking rather puzzled, pointing to JACK and ALGERNON*]. These gentlemen have expressed their wish for immediate baptism.

LADY BRACKNELL. At the christenings? The idea is grotesque and irreverent. Algernon, I forbid you to be baptised. I will not hear of such excesses. Lady Bracknell would be highly displeased if he learned that that was the reason which you wasted your time and money.

CHASUBLE. Am I to understand then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

JACK. I don't think that, as things are now, it would be of much value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

CHASUBLE. I am grieved to hear of such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. They savour of the hereticism of the Anabaptists, views that have been completely refuted in four of my published sermons. However, in my present mood seems to be one of penitence, I will return to the church. Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener that your last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

LADY BRACKNELL [*startling*]. Prism! Did I hear you mention Miss Prism?

CHASUBLE. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

LADY BRACKNELL. Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. The matter may prove to be one of great importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. Is this Miss Prism a friend of

at aspect, remotely connected education?

CHASUBLE [somewhat indignantly]. The most cultivated of ladies, the very picture of respectability.

BRACKNELL. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what she holds in your household?

CHASUBLE [severely]. I am a celibate,

[interposing]. Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew's esteemed governess and valued companion.

BRACKNELL. In spite of what you say of her, I must see her at once. She must be sent for.

CHASUBLE [looking off]. She appears to be; she is high.

Enter MISS PRISM hurriedly]

PRISM. I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. I have been waiting for you there for some time and three-quarters.

Catches sight of LADY BRACKNELL, who has fixed her with a stony glare. MISS PRISM grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape]

BRACKNELL [in a severe, judicial tone]. Prism! [MISS PRISM bows her head in shame] Come here, Prism! Prism approaches in a humble manner.

PRISM! Where is that baby? Where is it?

CHASUBLE. The Canon starts in great consternation. ALGERNON and JACK

begin to be anxious to shield CECILY from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal]

Twenty years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator that contained a baby, of the name of Ernest. You never returned. A

few weeks later, through the elaborate arrangements of the Metropolitan Police, the perambulator was discovered

at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume

novel of more than usually high sentimental value. [MISS PRISM

in involuntary indignation] But the manuscript was not there! [Everyone

looks up] MISS PRISM] Prism; where is the baby?

[A pause]

PRISM. Lady Bracknell, I am ashamed that I do not know.

CHASUBLE. I wish I did. The plain facts of

the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is forever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old, but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the bassinette, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

JACK [who has been listening attentively]. But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

MISS PRISM. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

JACK. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand-bag that contained that infant.

MISS PRISM. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

JACK. What railway station?

MISS PRISM [quite crushed]. Victoria. The Brighton line. [Sinks into a chair]

JACK. I must retire to my room for a moment. Gwendolen, wait here for me.

GWENDOLEN. If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life.

[Exit JACK in great excitement]

CHASUBLE. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

LADY BRACKNELL. I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. They are hardly considered the thing.

[Noises heard overhead as if someone was throwing trunks about. Everyone looks up]

CECILY. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

CHASUBLE. Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

LADY BRACKNELL. This noise is extremely unpleasant. It sounds as if he was having an argument. I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

CHASUBLE [looking up]. It has stopped now. [The noise is redoubled]

LADY BRACKNELL. I wish he would arrive at some conclusion.

GWENDOLEN. This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last.

[Enter JACK with a hand-bag of black leather in his hand]

JACK [*rushing over to Miss PRISM*]. Is this the hand-bag, Miss Prism? Examine it carefully before you speak. The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

MISS PRISM [*calmly*]. It seems to be mine. Yes, here is the injury it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, an incident that occurred at Leamington. And here, on the lock, are my initials. I had forgotten that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. The bag is undoubtedly mine. I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

JACK [*in a pathetic voice*]. Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand-bag. I was the baby you placed in it.

MISS PRISM [*amazed*]. You?

JACK [*embracing her*]. Yes . . . mother!

MISS PRISM [*recoiling in indignant astonishment*]. Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried!

JACK. Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? Mother, I forgive you. [*Tries to embrace her again*]

MISS PRISM [*still more indignant*]. Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [*Pointing to LADY BRACKNELL*] There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

JACK [*after a pause*]. Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, but would you kindly inform me who I am?

LADY BRACKNELL. I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

JACK. Algy's elder brother! Then I have a brother after all. I knew I had a brother! I always said I had a brother! Cecily, — how could you have ever doubted that I had a brother?

[Seizes hold of ALGERNON] Dr. Able, my unfortunate brother. Prism, my unfortunate brother. I do not grieve for you, Algernon. I do not grieve for you, my unfortunate brother. You young scoundrel, you will treat me with more respect in the future. You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

ALGERNON. Well, not till now, old boy, I admit. I did my best, ever, though I was out of practice. [*Shakes her*]

GWENDOLEN. [*To JACK*] Mother! But what own are you? What Christian name, now that you have come someone else?

JACK. Good heavens! . . . I have quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose?

GWENDOLEN. I never change my name except in my affections.

CECILY. What a noble nature! I have, Gwendolen!

JACK. Then the question has been cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta has a moment. At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, has she been christened already?

LADY BRACKNELL. Every child that money could buy, including you, had been lavished on your fond and doting parents.

JACK. Then I was christened? That is settled. Now, what was I given? Let me know the name.

LADY BRACKNELL. Being the son you were naturally christened after your father.

JACK [*irritably*]. Yes, but what was my father's Christian name?

LADY BRACKNELL [*meditatively*]. I cannot at the present moment remember what the General's Christian name was. But I have no doubt he had one. He was eccentric, I admit. But so are all the later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and malaria, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

JACK. Algy! Can't you remember what our father's Christian name was?

ALGERNON. My dear boy, we never even on speaking terms. I never knew him before I was a year old.

JACK. His name would appear in the Army Lists of the period, I suppose. Aunt Augusta?

LADY BRACKNELL. The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. But I have no

ne would appear in any military
ry.

C. The Army Lists of the last
ears are here. These delightful
should have been my constant
[*Rushes to bookcase and tears
ts out*] M. Generals. . . . Mal-
Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly
they have — Markby, Migsby,
Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840,
n, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel,
1869, Christian names, Ernest
[*Puts book very quietly down and
quite calmly*] I always told you,
olen, my name was Ernest, didn't
ell, it is Ernest after all. I mean
rally is Ernest.

BRACKNELL. Yes, I remember
e General was called Ernest. I
had some particular reason for
g the name.

NDOLEN. Ernest! My own
! I felt from the first that you
ave no other name!

. Gwendolen, it is a terrible

thing for a man to find out suddenly
that all his life he has been speaking
nothing but the truth. Can you for-
give me?

GWENDOLEN. I can. For I feel that
you are sure to change.

JACK. My own one!

CHASUBLE. [*To Miss Prism*]. Læti-
tia! [*Embraces her*]

MISS PRISM [*enthusiastically*]. Fred-
erick! At last!

ALGERNON. Cecily! [*Embraces her*]
At last!

JACK. Gwendolen! [*Embraces her*]
At last!

LADY BRACKNELL. My nephew, you
seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

JACK. On the contrary, Aunt Au-
gusta, I've now realised for the first
time in my life the vital Importance
of Being Earnest.

TABLEAU

CURTAIN

THE GAY LORD QUEX

(1899)

BY ARTHUR WING PINERO

ARTHUR WING PINERO

It is curious it is to re-read Pinero in the full light of Ibsen, Shaw, and Galsworthy. Manners and customs and morals change, but human nature remains the same. It is because Pinero, in the past, leaned so lightly upon manners and customs and morals of the '80's and '90's, and leaned upon nothing else, that now, after twenty-five years, he does not seem to have added as much to the advancement of the British stage as one has been led to expect by the numberless brilliant and interesting successes he has had.

There are two supreme characteristics about Pinero which still make us accept him as a leading figure in the British drama — one is his unfailing ability to interest us in his story; and the other is the never-failing perfectness of his technique, which often surmounts any weakness of intellectual reasoning or psychological analysis his plays might have. After twenty-five years, we come to regard him in historical perspective. We are able, with justice, to claim that while he did much to revive the fast declining drama of England in the '80's, he was a follower rather than a leader. In this respect his claim to permanence in the history of the modern British drama is not as secure, nor as justly important, as that of Henry James or George Bernard Shaw. He far exceeds the latter in his originality of invention, in his variety of character, in his exuberance of form. Like Jones, Pinero has consciously defied the convention of Mrs. Grundy, only in the end to make concessions to public sensibility. But by inheritance, Jones, a farmer's son, aimed his shafts at a society to which he could lay no claim, except as an observant outsider, whereas Pinero, coming from an Anglo-Portuguese stock of social position, levelled his satire at a society in which he had some inside hold.

On re-examining the early plays of Pinero and the early plays of Jones, it is not difficult to say, after twenty-five years, that the conscience of the farmer's son was stronger and more sensitive than the conscience of the London solicitor's son. It is because of that, it is because Jones, in his preface to "Saints and Sinners" (1881), and in his interesting book on "The Renaissance of the English Drama", showed that what the British stage of his early day most needed was an unprejudiced outlook upon life, where life was greater than society, that he is entitled to a place above that of Pinero.

Had Arthur Wing Pinero not been a dramatist, he would have been a very good novelist; not a story-teller of the Meredith type, nor of the Hardy type. Even though critics at one time accused him of depending upon Hardy's "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" in the writing of his comedy, "The Squire", given at the St. James's Theatre, in December, 1881. In the same way that Pinero has been able quite to overcome his inheritance from Tom Robertson — an inheritance which he has never wanted to repudiate — so would he never have been able, had he been a novelist, to shake off his debt to Charles Dickens. This

influence can be seen in his plays. He has the same method of character — a character portrayal which attaches itself to a trick of phrase, as a flying mark; such a trick, for example, as *Frayne's* exclamation that a thing is "alluring", in "The Gay Lord Quex" (1899), or *Sir William's* reiterated exclamation, "Have we no cheers!" in "Trelawny of the 'Wells'" (1899); such tricks by the side of *Uriah Heep*, with his clammy hands and his hum of *Newman Noggs*, and his cracking finger joints, of *Micawber*, with his "s turning up", of *Mantolini*, with his "Dem it! Bless its little heart!" — not for the fact that Pinero is supreme as a technical artist, these little tricks of his would, from the very beginning, have been monotonous and irritating. For he has always been inclined to shape his play, even to force it for its legitimate theatrical climax, rather than to measure and weigh every step in his position.

It is only after twenty-five years, when one has read, in rapid succession, numerous published plays by Pinero, that one discovers his repetition of style and idea, and his very slight variation of character. The inference is forced upon us that Pinero's art is a dominantly "clever" one, where he can claim the approval of an audience in "The Profligate" (1889), and then, a few years after, he can arouse sympathy through a drama like "Iris" (1901), and play remote themes of the same moral tone in "Mid-Channel" (1909). Even "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" (1893) suggests certain similarities with "His House in" (1906), which A. B. Walkley very interestingly declares should have been called "The Second Mrs. Jesson." Like the novelist also, Pinero becomes interested in people to such an extent that he develops the type to greater proportions, *Agatha* in "The Magistrate" (1885) becomes *Georgina Tidman* in "Dandy Dick" (1887); or he uses the same character over again, the *Lady Egidia Drummond* in "The Cabinet Minister" (1890), appearing in "The Amazons" (1893), in the conversation of *Lady Castlejordan's*.

This power of giving his plays new cuts from old material has always characterized Pinero. Even in the days of his Court Farces, when "The Magistrate" (1885), "The School-Mistress" (1886), and "Dandy Dick" (1887) helped to launch his career, it was his exuberance of dialogue, his easy skill in light character sketching, that enriched the slight framework of his invention. For, in his early days, Pinero was not able to disguise the clever manipulation of his technique. He applied the methods of the "well-made play", of the artificial comedy theory of farce which has thus been described by one of his critics:

He claims for it a wider scope and more comprehensive purpose than has ever been associated with farce of the old Adelphi type, or the modern genre of the Palais Royal. He has openly expressed his opinion that farce must gradually become the modern equivalent of comedy, since the present being a time of sentiment rather than of manners, the comic playwright must of necessity seek his humour in the exaggeration of sentiment.

After twenty-five years, however, the only claim that such plays as "The Horse" (1886), "The Cabinet Minister" (1890), "The Times" (1891), and "The Amazons" (1893), might have upon our attention would be their vivacity, rather than their permanence of comedy character or situation. They are many

to the artificiality of Boucicault's "London Assurance" (1841). They are of the perennial class with Sheridan's "The School for Scandal" (1777). That, but it might readily be claimed that Pinero, in his handling of the forms of comedy, has never approached the excellence of Henry Arthur Jones, of High Comedy manners, "Mary Goes First" (1913).

In English drama, Pinero has figured since 1877. He came at a time when the stage was at its lowest ebb, when there had been no tremendous reaction like that of Tom Robertson's insistence on a certain type of reality for the Englishman. Of Portuguese-Jewish extraction — his family originally spelled their name as *Pinheiro* — he was born in London, on the old Kent Road, May 24, 1854. Reared in a common-school education, he was persuaded by his father to go to law with him in Lincoln's Fields. This legal training, even though it was not to serve as a livelihood, was a good education for a dramatist of his type. When the theatre became dominant, he joined a company headed by Mr. R. H. Wyndham, Edinburgh managers, and was given by them small and a smaller salary. He played in Wilkie Collins's "Miss Gwilt", produced in 1876, and for five years was with Sir Henry Irving, assuming such parts as *Orestes* or the *King* in "Hamlet", and *Salarino* in "The Merchant of Venice".

In October, 1877, he wrote a small piece entitled "Two Hundred a Year", followed by a number of curtain-raisers, which Irving produced and in which Irving acted. The casts of some of his early dramas show the names of R. C. Carton, F. Esmond, and Myra Holme, who afterwards became Lady Pinero. In November, 1880, that he definitely launched his career as a dramatist, with a play entitled "The Money Spinner."

It is for this play because it brought Pinero into association with Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Shaw and John Hare, and was the beginning of that long series of special productions which marked most of the Pinero productions, and which undoubtedly influenced him in the selection of his *dramatis personæ* while writing.

The first volume of the definitive edition of Pinero's play, edited by Mr. Clayton, "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" (1893) and "The Notorious Mrs. Ebb" (1895) challenge reconsideration. It is a reconsideration in the light of the fact that after our social conscience has been awakened through the Fabian ideas of G. B. Shaw and the ironical methods of Galsworthy. Our psychology has become more acute in the last twenty-five years, and this will undoubtedly affect our judgment of Pinero's serious plays.

It might be said that when "The Profligate" was presented, in 1889, Pinero began to stride. But with the perversity which has always marked his development, he could never be relied upon to take the same length of step each time, having now turned, at will, from farce to sentiment, from sentiment to satire, from satire to comedy. Yet undoubtedly, "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" and "The Notorious Mrs. Ebb" mark a well-defined period in the development of Pinero. They represent the effect Ibsen had upon him, an effect produced in the playwright after he had witnessed the first London production of "Ghosts", by the Grein's Independent Theatre, on March 13, 1891.

The application of the word "social" to Pinero, critics approach the very heart of his talent as a playwright, and of his claim to position in the British drama as a thinker. In his introduction to one of his first printed plays, "The

Times" (1892), he shows a reflection of attitude, a reaction of response to the Ibsen philosophy, when he writes:

At this particular moment in the struggling existence of our drama the playwright ought perhaps to offer an apology for a work which, he expects, may be considered unpretentious. Yet, even at a time when the best dramatic taste is, we are assured, deliberately severe, there may be some to whom the spectacle of the mimic castigation of the lighter faults of human nature may prove entertaining — nay, more, to certain simple minds, instructive. There may be still those who consider that the follies, even the vices, of the age may be chastised as effectually by a sounding blow from the hollow blade of the jester as by the fierce application of the knout; that a moral need may variably be enforced with the sententiousness of the sermon or the earnestness of the tract.

This, seemingly, is Pinero's criticism of the early "bold" Mr. Jones and the later "daring" Mr. Shaw. In view of our having lived since the '80's a period of keenly critical social philosophy, it does not seem that Pinero has much in the case he holds against the thesis drama. It is not reticence or timidity that has made him so loath to go deep in his criticism of English society; it is a fault of character which indicates in him the absence of social sympathy. The inability of Pinero to shift his social vision is, therefore, one of his shortcomings, and he finds himself in these present days as specifically dated in the history of the British drama as though he were no longer creating.

Yet it is because of his retention of that creative faculty to an almost heroic height, that a play by Arthur Wing Pinero, in these days, twenty-five years after the production of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" and "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith," is an expectancy and speculation. As an important craftsman he has, since the appearance of these two dramas, advanced far and matured unerringly. "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" and "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" read well, but the dialogue has literary character to it. Their psychology is still theatrical and uninteresting. Yet, put by the side of *Paula Tanqueray* the figure of *Hedda Gabler*, and by the side of *Agnes Ebbsmith* the figure of *Rebecca West* (1886), and say to the audience, upon Pinero, and then on Ibsen. Even the unerring surface photograph of *Dangars*, in "The Profligate", the *Duke of St. Olpherts*, in "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith", and the gay *Lord Quez*, invite comparison with *Doctor Rast* in *A Doll's House*. Mr. Hamilton refers to Pinero as being a forward-looking dramatist; nevertheless he claims that when he discussed "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" with Pinero, the latter told him much about the early life of *Agnes*, and her inheritance from her father and her mother. None of this antecedent information is overpoweringly impressed upon us in the text of the play, as *Nora's* antecedents are made vital in "A Doll's House." Bernard Shaw had a right to sneer at the social philosophy of Pinero, who tried to make his heroine a Hyde Park flower, a woman, and sought to impress us with her modern fearlessness. Pinero is entirely too forward-looking in the writing of this play, because he unconsciously shaped everything to culminate in *Agnes's* Bible-burning scene—a scene which, in its organic character, offers contrast with *Hedda Gabler's* burning of *Eilert Lövborg's* manuscript; not that these two scenes are comparable.

s, but in their technical placing as inherent parts of the drama they do form significant technical contrast.

For twenty-five years, the interest in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" is still

In the reading of all Pinero's plays, however, to the time of "His House of Cards", we detect that great failing of his — the inability to write dialogue which accords with the character destined to speak it; he is still old-fashioned in this respect. He is inclined to be a little bombastic in his speech, a little platitudinous in his thought, and often given to the "aside." As Walkley so acutely suggests, Pinero is devoid of any fastidious feeling for realism in language.

Considering historically the time in which "Tanqueray" and "Ebb-smith" were written, we cannot but feel that they are mile-posts of a most significant order in the history of the modern British drama. Pinero's technique has advanced with the times. No one will gainsay the fact that, in point of artistry, "His House of Cards" (1906), "The Thunderbolt" (1908), "Mid-Channel" (1909), "The 'Mindful' Girl" (1912), are far better in their literary character than "The Benefit of Doubt" (1895), "The Princess and the Butterfly" (1897), and "Iris" (1901). These latter plays have lost none of their fascination as expert pieces of drama — and as interesting examples of the story-teller's art. Who could gainsay the rhetorical charm of "Trelawny of the 'Wells'", with its character portrait of Robertson's *alias Tom Wrench*?

Pinero is not interested in the individual, except as a god in the machine which he is creating. And he creates it so perfectly, so exactly, that he finds himself completely governed by the machine; that is why Mr. Hamilton is right in calling Pinero the playwright's playwright, in the same sense that for all time Spenser will remain as the poet's poet. As Pinero has grown older, he has not relinquished the "tricks" which were practised by him in earlier years. *Cayle Drummler*, "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray", is a foreshadowing of the *Hon. Peter Mottram* in "Mid-Channel." The Bible-burning scene in "Ebb-smith" suggests a method used in "Iris", when *Maldivado* upsets the furniture. The only period that seems to have outgrown is his "Sweet Lavender" (1888) years, a character-epoch which flowered and matured in "The Princess and the Butterfly", and more or less, to have died out.

As a dramatist of the serious, Pinero becomes a student of the individual, of the type rather than of the type. It may be that had Ibsen been born in London, in 1829 (1881), his *Hedda*, his *Ellida* (1888), and his *Hilda* might have been subjected to an environment which would have left them less intellectually diseased. They would also have had less brains. They would have been more apt to be moved by their social circumstances, as in the case of *Iris*, than by the universal laws of heredity, as in the case of *Nora*.

In "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" and in "The Profligate", the woman and the man are subjected to the fate of their past sins, but these sins are marked by circumstance, not by heredity. *Lechmere*, in "Letty" (1903), for example, when on the verge, cries out that he is a victim of past generations. But Pinero fails, in most of his plays, to have character disturbed by an active past. Even in "His House of Cards", the first *Mrs. Jesson* is not as vitally present as is *Mrs. Rosmer* in "Smersholm." It may be that this is the difference between what we call realism and Pinero seriousness. "Iris" is not a study of sin; it is a study of the weakness of character, subject to time and place. In other words, Pinero's characters either conquer or are conquered by circumstance.

The technique of a dramatist who has attained such perfect execution is the result of close study. Throughout his career, Pinero has been reticent regarding the merits of himself; much more reticent than Henry Arthur Jones, who has written books which might be quoted in criticism against himself. Of his dramatic technique Pinero does not often write. His famous lecture on Stevenson, issued in 1896 by the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, is the only guide we have to what he considers playwriting to be. During the course of this lecture he said:

What is dramatic talent? Is it not the power to project characters so as to cause them to tell an interesting story through the medium of dialogue? This is *dramatic* talent; and dramatic talent, if I may so express it, is the material of theatrical talent. Dramatic, like poetic, talent is born, not made; if it is to achieve success on the stage it must be developed into theatrical talent by hard study, and generally by long practice. For theatrical talent consists in the power of making your characters not only tell a story by means of dialogue, but tell it in such skilfully-devised form and order as shall, within the limits of an ordinary theatrical representation, give rise to the greatest possible amount of that peculiar kind of emotional effect, the product of which is the one great function of the theatre.

That Pinero possesses a dominant theatrical talent is not to be denied. He learned his technique through a long life of association in the theatre. As one critic said, his position would have been higher "if he could but forget off his technical skill by bedeviling . . . his main theme with a glittering series of inessential things." He has made actors, and actors have made him. In this respect his counterpart in American drama is Clyde Fitch. His work is intimately associated with the development of John Hare; *Quex*, *Heron*, in *"Bountiful"* (1891), *Dangars*, in *"The Profligate"*, the *Duke of St. Olaf*, *"Ebbsmith"*, were as assuredly shaped for the talents of Hare as was *Mrs. Patrick Campbell*, after her first success in *"The Quaker"*.

Perhaps no British dramatist is personally so little known to the public as Pinero. His name is attached to many documents of public interest, not because, being a Dean among members of the new school, it is the proper thing for him to do. His plays have appeared with regularity, and each has been successful on its own merit; and no dramatist of his generation — unless it be Jones — has challenged so much enthusiastic support and so much contrary criticism. He was an experimenter, not only in stage technique, but in showing how far technique could be applied to the governing of character. His *"Iris"* was unjustifiably brutal in its solution, his interest being to see how far down in the scale of life he could go with a woman when the machinery of his invention showed that, at any moment, he could have saved her if he had so wished.

It seems strange that a quarter of a century back any manager should have hesitated to give Pinero's "social" dramas. Both George Alexander and Henry Frohman hesitated when brought face to face with *"Tanqueray."*

We are told that Pinero's stories come to him first, that the characters are chosen first, and the plot he has selected. One writer has declared that "Pinero must first choose his scenes. He went and had a good look at the Albany before placing the

ers of *Aubrey Tanqueray*. For the later scenes he visited Haslemere which led Willowmere, and Mrs. Cortleyon's house was one which he had actually as the guest of Mrs. Humphry Ward."

ing a man of the theatre he leaves nothing to the haphazard choice of his s. He draws his ground-plan for his stage carpenter. He sketches his for the painter. According to Daniel Frohman, whose name is so closely ated with Pinero's in the American career of the latter, the Pinero script is with minute stage directions — "so complete and thorough in detail that it ot difficult to rehearse them from the author's point of view. In 'The Ama- (1893), for instance, the play was so surcharged with business that one-half humourous effect lay in the interrelated action of the characters."

However enthusiastic our admiration for the body of Pinero's work, there is no g the fact, as Shaw says, that no one would guess he was a contemporary en, Tolstoi, Meredith, or Sarah Grand. With him, thought is but a part of uation. It does not go deep. It has no very great partisan feeling. His are clever sketches rather than realistic paintings of social conditions. In al humourous way of stating things, Shaw writes: "It is significant of the nce between my temperament and Mr. Pinero's, that when he, as a little rst heard 'Ever of thee I'm fondly dreaming', he wept; whereas at the same age I simply noted with scorn the obvious plagiarism from 'Cheer, boys, ,,"

other words, Shaw would arrive at the same conclusion reached by Mario that Pinero's power is entirely emotional.

ot strange, therefore, that in this re-statement of Pinero, we cannot place that development, so excellently outlined by Holbrook Jackson in "The en Nineties." For, as Mr. Jackson has said, Pinero was a pioneer of the ovement only by way of compromise.

ose social elements which are to be noted in the rise in influence of the Fabian y had no interest for him when he was a young man. The deeper social sense, has been behind Shaw and Brieux, Galsworthy and Barker, has claimed none concern. As a technical expert, he came into the dramatic horizon when h drama was at its lowest ebb. The critic, P. P. Howe, in his "Dramatic its", claims that the final estimate of Pinero will be that despite his defects ot the theatres open at a time when they threatened to shut down.

the re-reading of the Pinero plays, one is still impressed by the freshness of ries. They have not staled after a quarter of a century, though we may be o see more of the machinery in "Tanqueray" than we did when it was first ed. What fate will overtake Pinero during the next quarter of a century is o determine, especially in this onrush of democratic taste. It is economics ociology, not technique, that have made him a little old-fashioned, that have from him his special claim to distinction. The vitality of *Paula* and *Agnes* ter than the vitality of *Camille*. These plays may yet find their way into a al repertory as permanent examples of a period drama, but they have no place in that renaissance which immediately preceded the present war, and is represented by Galsworthy's "The Silver Box" (1906), "Justice" (1910), "The Pigeon" (1912), or by Barker's "The Madras House" (1910), "Waste", and "The Voysey Inheritance" (1905). Throughout Pinero's career, there en a peculiar lack of any of the poetry of life, of any of the fundamental re-

relationships which remain, no matter how time and place may change. Nevertheless, considering the period which has elapsed since 1893 and 1895, it is surprising how well the framework of "Tanqueray" and "Ebb-smith" holds its own. The permanence of framework is due, not to the mental Pinero, but entirely to the tremendous claim on our attention — his worth technically as a dramatic artist.

"The Gay Lord Quex" has been selected as representative of the qualities of Pinero in characterization and in story-telling. It may be true, as Symonds says in his "Dramatic Portraits", that it took Pinero two acts to get Quex into the bedroom, and two acts to get him out; but there is something more to "The Gay Lord Quex" than that. It is, as Max Beerbohm proclaimed it, when it was first given at the Globe Theatre, London, on April 8, 1899, a technical *coup*. At the time of its presentation, both in England and New York, it was probably one of the most talked-about pieces on the current stage. In the character of *Sophy* and in the character of *Quex*, Pinero's whole interest seems to have centred. He is a *genre* pictures. His technique is deft and definite. But even here, as Symonds wrote, when the play was revived at the Duke of York's Theatre, "He has no breadth of view, but he has a clear view. He suggests nothing; you all he knows."

The play was brought to America by Mr. Hare, and was given at the New York Criterion Theatre, on November 12, 1900. A revival was seen in New York in the season of 1917, the text being revamped by Pinero to accord with the changing styles of architecture and fashion. In other words, "The Gay Lord Quex" was sprinkled with up-to-date electrical contrivances and automobiles. In technique the play was in part old-fashioned, but still showed the master hand of the seasoned dramatist.

THE GAY LORD QUEX

(1899)

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

By ARTHUR W. PINERO

COPYRIGHT, 1900,
BY ROBERT HOWARD RUSSELL
All rights reserved
Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England

This play is fully protected by the copyright law, all requirements of which have been complied with. In its present printed form it is dedicated to the reading public only, and no performances of it may be given without the written permission of Daniel Frohman, owner of the acting rights, who may be addressed in care of the publisher.

Reprinted by permission of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, and by special arrangement with William Heinemann, London, and Walter H. Baker and Company, Boston.

ACT I

ESTABLISHMENT OF SOPHY FULLGARNEY, MANICURIST AND DISPENSER OF
ARTICLES FOR THE TOILET, 185 NEW BOND STREET.

(Afternoon)

ACT II

OWBRIDGE'S. THE "ITALIAN GARDEN," FAUNCEY COURT, RICHMOND.

(Evening)

ACT III

A BOUDOIR AND BEDROOM AT FAUNCEY COURT.

(Night)

ACT IV

IN BOND STREET AGAIN.

(The Following Day)

Action of the Play is comprised within the space of twenty-four hours.

THE CAST FOR THE FIRST ENGLISH PRODUCTION

Globe Theatre, London
April 8, 1899

THE MARQUESS OF QUEX	Mr. John Hare
SIR CHICHESTER FRAYNE <i>Governor of Uumbos, West Coast of Africa</i>	Mr. Gilbert Hare
CAPTAIN BASTLING	Mr. Charles Cherrill
"VALMA", otherwise	
FRANK POLLITT . . . <i>a Professional Palmist</i>	Mr. Frank Gillmore
THE DUCHESS OF STROOD	Miss Fortescue
JULIA, COUNTESS OF OWBRIDGE	Miss Fanny Coleman
MRS. JACK EDEN	Miss Mona K. O'Connell
MURIEL EDEN . . . <i>her sister-in-law</i>	Miss Mabel Terry
SOPHY FULLGARNEY . . <i>a Manicurist</i>	Miss Irene Vanbrugh
MISS MOON }	Miss Laura M'Gill
MISS HUDDLE }	Miss Doris Temples
MISS CLARIDGE } . . . <i>her assistants</i>	Miss Victoria Adams
MISS LIMBIRD }	Miss Marion Dolan
A YOUNG LADY AND OTHER PATRONS OF MISS FULLGARNEY	Miss K. Carpenter
	Mrs. Copleston
	Miss B. Coleman
	Mr. Richard Lamont
	Mr. Hubert Evelyn
SERVANTS AT FAUNCEY COURT	Mr. Abbot and M. H. Jones

[This play was first produced in America, at the Criterion Theatre, New York, November 12, 1900, with Mr. Hare as *Quex*.]

THE GAY LORD QUEX

ACT I

represents a manicure establishment in New Bond Street. It is a front room upon the first floor with three French-windows affording a view of certain buildings on the east of the street. On the left, furthest from the spectator, is a wide, arched opening, apparently leading to another apartment, in which is the doorway entrance to the rooms from the staircase. Nearer, there is another French-window, opening on to a verandah of "leads" and showing the exterior of the wall of the further apartment above-mentioned. From the top of the above-mentioned window, runs a horizontal partition, about nine feet in height, with panels of opaque glass.

This partition extends more or less half-way across the room, then turns forward for some distance, turns at a sharp angle, and terminates at the arched opening and the doorway on the left. That part of the partition running from right to left is used on its left side and forms, more or less, a separate room or compartment.

Facing the audience, on the right, is a door admitting to this apartment; and, on the left, also a partition opposite the windows. On the right, is an opening with a half-back portière. The space between this opening and the further partition forms a narrow ante-room, containing articles of furniture visible through the opening. Mirrors are placed to the right wall, between the doorway and the middle window and the doorway on the left, between the middle window and the doorway, while on the left, between the middle window and the partition, is a large mirror. A number of business cards are stuck in the frames of the mirrors. On the right, before the two lower windows, turned towards the spectators, is a capacious chair, made in cane open-work.

Attached to the arms of these chairs are little screens — also made of cane — shielding, in a measure, the occupants of the chairs from observation. Upon both the right and left arms of these chairs are circular frames in cane, shaped to receive bowls of water. Above each of the screen-chairs stands a smaller chair, set to face the larger one; and beside the small chair, on its right hand, is a low table upon which are arranged the instruments and toilet necessities employed in the process of manicure. On the right, between the window and the partition, is a three-cornered what-not, on which are set out packets of soap and of powder and other articles of the toilet. At the further end of the room, in the centre, stands a desk laden with account-books; and, above the desk, its back against the partition, is a chair. On the right is a hat-and-umbrella stand. Nearer, in the centre, is a large circular table on which are displayed bottles of scent and liquid soap, cases of instruments for manicure, and some wooden bowls of bath-soap with lather brushes. On the right and left are ordinary chairs. Placed against the partition on the left, and facing the audience, is a cabinet, making a display similar to that upon the what-not. Nearer, on the left, there is another screen-chair set to face the audience; below it is a smaller seat and, by the side of the smaller seat, another little table with manicure tools, &c. Some framed photographs of ladies hang against the wood-work of the partition and in the wall-spaces; and in the lower and middle windows, on the right, bird-cages are suspended.

The light is that of a bright day in June.
[On the right MISS CLARIDGE and MISS HUDDLE are in the final stages of manicuring two smart-looking men.

The men occupy the screen-chairs; the manicurists — comely girls in black frocks — sit, facing the men, upon the smaller seats. On the left MISS MOON is rougeing and varnishing the nails of a fashionably-dressed young lady whose maid is seated at the table in the centre. MISS LIMBIRD is at the desk, deep in accounts]

MISS MOON. *[To the young lady]* You won't have them too red, will you?

YOUNG LADY. Not too red — nicely flushed.

FIRST GENTLEMAN *[examining his nails critically as he rises]*. I say though, that's a vast improvement!

MISS CLARIDGE. Getting more shapely, aren't they?

FIRST GENTLEMAN. Thanks awfully.

[He pays MISS LIMBIRD, stands talking to her for a while, and ultimately strolls away through the opening in the partition. After putting her table in order, MISS CLARIDGE goes out the same way, carrying her bowl of water and towel]

MISS MOON. *[To the young lady]* Have you had your hand read yet, madam, by any of these palmists?

YOUNG LADY. Heavens, yes! I've been twice to that woman Bernstein, and I don't know how often to Chiron.

MISS MOON. Ah, you ought to try Valma.

YOUNG LADY. Valma?

MISS MOON. He's the latest. Ladies are flocking to him.

YOUNG LADY. Really?

MISS MOON. Yes. Such taking manners.

YOUNG LADY. Where does he —?

MISS MOON. 186 — next door. *[Indicating the window on the left]* You can see his waiting-room from that window.

YOUNG LADY. Is he a guinea or half a guinea?

MISS MOON. Oh, he's a guinea.

YOUNG LADY. That's a bore.

MISS MOON. Ah, but consider, madam — his rooms are draped from ceiling to floor in blue velvet. Blue velvet! fancy! Not that I've had the privilege of viewing them myself; Miss F. is our authority.

YOUNG LADY. Miss F.?

MISS MOON. I beg your pardon — Miss Fullgarney. Valma is quite neighbourly with Miss Fullgarney.

[A door-gong sounds — every time any one quits the establishment, signifying that the first has departed]

SECOND GENTLEMAN *[rising]*. Obligated. *[Putting a tip into MISS LIMBIRD'S hand]*. For yourself.

MISS HUDDLE. Much obliged.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. You face here?

MISS HUDDLE. Yes; I understand you with Mossu and Madame Mortimer Street.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. I'll call next time. What name?

MISS HUDDLE. Miss Huddle.

SECOND GENTLEMAN. Huddle.

MISS HUDDLE. Well, p'r'haps I better ask for Miss Huddle. Miss Fullgarney is going to ask for that.

SECOND GENTLEMAN *[with a bow]*. Goo' bye.

MISS HUDDLE. Good-day.

[He pays MISS LIMBIRD, who goes out. The maid rises and the young lady her glove]

MISS MOON *[taking a card from the mirror]*. Would you like a Valma's, madam, just to remind you?

YOUNG LADY *[accepting the card]*. "Valma. Professor of the Sciences of Chiromancy and Chiromnomy. 186, New Street." *[Giving the card to the mirror]*. Keep that. *[The door-gong sounds]*

MISS MOON *[opening a door]*. Look, madam. That's one of the rooms; the window there — one —

YOUNG LADY. Yes, I see. Good morning.

MISS MOON. Good morning.

[The young lady pays her bill, and goes, followed by her maid]

MISS HUDDLE. *[To MISS MOON]*. What time is it, dear?

MISS MOON *[putting her table in order]*. Half-past one. Lunch time.

MISS HUDDLE. Thought I had seen a vacancy.

[MISS HUDDLE goes out with her bowl and towel, and POLLITT — "VALMA" appears at the window on the left, a well, if rather showy young fellow, wearing a coat, white waistcoat, and leather boots. He is]

in a common-place way and, though stilted and self-conscious, earnest in speech and bearing]
 TT [looking in]. Excuse me —
 MOON [startled]. Oh! oh, Mr.

TT [entering]. Is Miss Full-
 n the way?

MOON [gazing at him in modest
 on]. She's with a lady in the
 room, Mr. Valma.

[The door in the partition opens]

[from the private room]. Oh,

am, I promise I won't forget.

y not. I take too much in-

your daughter's nails for that.

MOON. This is her.

A middle-aged lady enters from

the private room followed by

SOPHY FULLGARNEY. The cus-

tommer pays at the desk while

SOPHY rattles on. SOPHY is a

pretty, elegant, innocently vul-

gar, fascinating young woman

of six-and-twenty]

[with the air of the proprietress

perous establishment]. Oh, yes,

o my memory to come on Thurs-

n't it? The truth is I had a

king head, a thing I never have

I oughtn't to say never have,

? [To Miss LIMBIRD] Now,

mbird, see that two pots of

le Mimosa are posted to Mrs.

Carlos Place; and book me,

-me — you thoroughly under-

-to attend upon Miss Arment

w evening at seven. [Accom-

the customer, who now withdraws]

ow evening at seven — without

aising her voice] The door,

ridge. Good morning, madam.

ernoon.

[The door-gong sounds]

. Come, girls, you can get to

ches.

MISS LIMBIRD leaves her desk

and goes out]

MOON. Here's Mr. Valma,

lgarney.

[with a little gasp]. Mr.

[Approaching him] How do

TT [advancing]. Pardon me for

ty I have taken in again cross-

eads.

[looking away from him]. No

t all.

TT. I desire a few words with

ss Fullgarney, and it struck me

this time of the day —

SOPHY. Yes, there's nothing doing
 here just at lunch-time.

POLLITT. Perhaps you would gra-
 ciously allow me to converse with you
 while you —

SOPHY [regaining her self-possession].

Oh, I had my lunch an hour ago; I

came over so ravenous. [Going to

Miss MOON, who is still lost in admira-

tion of POLLITT — in a whisper] Be

off, child. Don't stand staring at Mr.

Valma.

MISS MOON [in SOPHY's ear]. I think

I've got him another!

SOPHY. Shut up!

[Miss MOON withdraws, with her

bowl and towel]

SOPHY. [To POLLITT] Did you catch

what she said? Oh, it doesn't matter

if you did; you know we are all working

for you, like niggers.

POLLITT [tenderly]. Ah!

SOPHY. Not a customer leaves my

place without having heard your name

mentioned. My girls are regular

bricks.

POLLITT [approaching her]. And what

are you?

SOPHY [looking away again]. Oh, I

do no more than any of the others.

POLLITT. Do you expect me to be-

lieve that? you, their queen! No, it is

you who have helped me to steer my

bark into the flowing waters of popu-

larity.

SOPHY [nervously]. Extremely pleased,

I — I'm sure. [He is close beside her;

a cork is drawn loudly. They part,

startled and disturbed. She goes to the

opening in the partition, raising her

voice slightly] Girls, can't you draw

your corks a shade quieter? Nice if

somebody was coming upstairs!

MISS LIMBIRD [in the distance]. Very

sorry, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY. [To POLLITT, as she toys with

the articles upon the circular table]

Everything is so up this weather. It's

their lime-juice champagne.

POLLITT [by her side again — sud-

denly]. I love you!

SOPHY. Oh, Mr. Valma!

POLLITT. I love you! Ever since I

had the honour of being presented to

you by Mr. Salmon, the picture-dealer

next door, I have thought of you,

dreamt of you, constantly. [She brushes

past him; he follows her] Miss Full-

garney, you will accord me permission

to pay you my addresses?

SOPHY [in a flutter]. I — I am highly

flattered and complimented, Mr. Valma, by your proposal —

POLLITT [*taking her hand*]. Flattered — no!

SOPHY [*withdrawing her hand*]. Oh, but please wait!

POLLITT. Wait!

SOPHY. I mean, I certainly couldn't dream of accepting the attentions of any man until he fully understood —

POLLITT. Understood what?

SOPHY [*summoning all her dignity*]. Oh, I'll be perfectly straight with you — until he fully understood that, whatever my station in life may be now, I have risen from rather — well, I may say *very small beginnings*.

POLLITT. What matters that?

SOPHY. Oh, but I beg your pardon — it does. [*Relaxing*] I am sure I can depend on you not to give me away all over the place?

POLLITT. Miss Fullgarney —!

SOPHY [*after a cautious glance round*]. You know, Mr. Valma, I was always a self-willed, independent sort of a girl — a handful, they used to call me; and when father died I determined to have done with my stepmother, and to come to London at any price. I was seventeen then.

POLLITT. Yes?

SOPHY. Oh, it's nothing to be ashamed of, really; still, I did begin life in town [*with an uneasy little laugh and a toss of the head*] — you'd hardly believe it! — as a nursery-maid.

POLLITT. H'm! I am aware that is not considered —

SOPHY. I should think not! Oh, of course, in time I rose to be Useful Maid, and then Maid. I've been lady's-maid in some excellent houses. And when I got sick of maiding I went to Dundas's opposite, and served three years at the hairdressing; that's an extremely refined position, I needn't say. And then some kind friends routed me out [*surveying the room proudly*] and put me into this.

POLLITT. Then why bestow a second thought upon your beginnings?

SOPHY. No, I suppose I oughtn't to. Nobody can breathe a word against my respectability. All the same, I am quite aware that it mightn't be over-pleasant for a gentleman to remember that his wife was once — [*sitting in the screen-chair*] well, a servant.

POLLITT [*by her chair*]. It would not weigh on my mind if you had been

kitchen-maid [*pointing out of the door*] at Fletcher's Hotel. [*Looking at him*] It's this business I for.

SOPHY. This business!

POLLITT. For you. If you more than glide about your superintending your young ladies, facing her] But I hate the thought of your sitting here, or then some man's hand in yours!

SOPHY [*suddenly ablaze*]. [*Pointing out of the window*] sit there, day after day, women's hands in yours!

POLLITT [*eagerly*]. You are afraid of me?

SOPHY [*panting*]. A little.

POLLITT [*going down upon his knees*]. Ah, you do love me!

SOPHY [*faintly*]. Fondly.

POLLITT. And you will be true to me?

SOPHY. Yes.

POLLITT [*embracing her*]. My dear!

SOPHY. Not yet! suppose I saw you!

POLLITT. Let all the world know!

SOPHY [*submissively, laying her hand upon his brow*]. Oh, but I wish to be married, yet I don't wish —

POLLITT. What?

SOPHY. That you were not my superior in every way.

POLLITT [*in an altered voice*]. What?

SOPHY [*in a murmur, her eyes fixed on the ground*]. Eh-h-h?

POLLITT. I have had my struggles too.

SOPHY. You, love?

POLLITT. Yes. If you should hear —

SOPHY. Hear —?

POLLITT. That until recently I was a solicitor's clerk —

SOPHY [*slightly surprised*]. A solicitor's clerk?

POLLITT. You would not think me?

SOPHY. Ah, as if —!

POLLITT. You know my name is Pollitt — Frank Toleman Pollitt.

SOPHY. I've heard it is Valma. [*With a little shiver*] I have in mind that.

POLLITT. But I shall be with you henceforth, sha'n't I?

SOPHY. Oh, no, no! always to me — [*dreamily*] my Valma's lips meet in a prolonged kiss. [*Door-gong sounds*] Get up! in a hurry. She holds his hand.

and see who it is. Oh, don't go nute! stay a minute!

They separate; he stands looking out upon the leads.

MISS CLARIDGE enters, preceding the MARQUESS OF QUEX and SIR CHICHESTER FRAYNE. LORD

QUEX is forty-eight, keen-faced and bright-eyed, faultless in dress, in manner debonair and charming.

FRAYNE is a genial wreck of about five-and-forty — the lean and shrivelled remnant of a once good-looking man. His face is yellow and puckered, his hair prematurely silvered, his mustache palpably touched-up]

[perceiving SOPHY and approaching.] How are you, Miss Full-

ing SOPHY with interest]

My aunt — Lady Owbridge

asked me to meet her here at lock. Her ladyship is lunching

at a shop close by — bunning is a sitting expression — with Mrs. and Miss Eden.

Yes, I believe Miss Muriel

ce her pretty finger-tips in your

partly to FRAYNE] while I escort

wbridge and Mrs. Jack to view

ew biblical picture — [with a ges-

w doors up. What is the sub-

Moses in the Bulrushes. [To

l] Come with us, Chick.

It's not quite two, my lord ;

ike, you've just time to run in

or and have your palm read.

My palm — ?

By this extraordinary palm-

ybody is talking about — Valma.

[pleasantly]. One of those for-

ling fellows, eh? [Shaking his

I prefer the gipsy on Epsom race-

[under her breath]. Oh, indeed !

Please take a seat.

She flounces up to the desk and

busies herself there vindictively]

NE. [To QUEX] Who's that

hat's her name?

K. Fullgarney ; a protégée of the

Her father was bailiff to old

ten, at their place in Norfolk.

NE. Rather alluring — eh,

QUEX [wincing]. Don't, Chick!

FRAYNE. My dear Harry, it is perfectly proper, now that you are affianced to Miss Eden, and have reformed, all that sort of thing — it is perfectly proper that you should no longer observe pretty women too narrowly.

QUEX. Obviously.

FRAYNE. But do bear in mind that your old friend is not so pledged. Recollect that I have been stuck for the last eight years, with intervals of leave, on the West Coast of Africa, nursing malaria

QUEX [severely]. Only malaria?

FRAYNE [mournfully]. There is nothing else to nurse, dear Harry, on the West Coast of Africa. [Glancing at SOPHY] Yes, by gad, that gal is alluring!

QUEX [walking away]. Tsssh! you're a bad companion, Chick!

[He goes to the window and looks into the street. FRAYNE joins him. SOPHY, seizing her opportunity, comes down to POLLITT]

SOPHY. [To POLLITT] Valma, dear, you see that man?

POLLITT. Which of the two?

SOPHY. The dark one. That's Lord Quex — the wickedest man in London.

POLLITT. He looks it. [Jealously] Have you ever cut his nails?

SOPHY. No, love, no. Oh, I've heard such tales about him!

POLLITT. What tales?

SOPHY. I'll tell you [demurely] when we're married. And the worst of it is, he is engaged to Miss Eden.

POLLITT. Who is she?

SOPHY. Miss Muriel Eden, my foster-sister; the dearest friend I have in the world — except you, sweetheart. It was Muriel and her brother Jack who put me into this business. And now my darling is to be sacrificed to that gay old thing — !

[The door-gong sounds; QUEX turns expectantly]

POLLITT. If Miss Eden is your foster-sister —

SOPHY. Yes, of course, she's six-and-twenty. But the poor girl has been worried into it by her sister-in-law, Mrs. Jack, whose one idea is Title and Position. Title and Position with that old rake by her side!

[MISS LIMBIRD enters, preceding CAPTAIN BASTLING — a smart, soldierly-

looking man of about eight-and-twenty. MISS LIMBIRD returns to her seat at the desk]

SOPHY [seeing BASTLING]. My gracious!

POLLITT. What's the matter?

QUEX [recognizing BASTLING and greeting him]. Hallo, Napier! how are you?

BASTLING [shaking hands with QUEX]. Hallo, Quex!

QUEX. What are you doing here?

SOPHY. [To POLLITT] Phew! I hope to goodness Lord Quex won't tumble to anything.

POLLITT. Tumble — to what?

[QUEX introduces BASTLING to FRAYNE]

SOPHY. You don't understand; it's Captain Bastling — the man Muriel is really fond of.

POLLITT. What, while she's engaged —?

SOPHY [with clenched hands]. Yes, and she shall marry him too, my darling shall, if I can help to bring it about.

POLLITT. You?

SOPHY. Bless 'em, I don't know how they'd contrive without me!

POLLITT. Contrive —?

SOPHY [fondly]. You old stupid! whenever Muriel is coming to be manicured she sends Captain Bastling a warning overnight [squeezing POLLITT's arm, roguishly]; this kind of thing — "My heart is heavy and my nails are long. To-morrow — three-thirty." Ha, ha, ha!

POLLITT. Dearest, let me advise you —

SOPHY [her hand upon his lips]. Ah, don't lecture! [BASTLING saunters forward to attract SOPHY's attention] Oh —! [To POLLITT, hurriedly] Go now. Pop in again by-and-by. [Caresingly] Um-m-m! my love!

[POLLITT goes out by the window]

SOPHY [joining BASTLING — formally]. Good-day, Captain Bastling.

BASTLING. Good-afternoon, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY [dropping her voice]. She'll be here in a minute.

BASTLING [in low tones — making a show of examining the articles on the circular table]. Yes, I had a note from her this morning. [Glancing at QUEX] Confounded nuisance —!

SOPHY [pretending to display the articles]. It's all right; he's got to take Lady Owbridge and Mrs. Jack Eden to

look at Moses in the Bulr picture —

BASTLING. Sophy — I've b

SOPHY. No! what?

BASTLING. My regiment i to Hong-Kong.

SOPHY. Great heavens! you off?

BASTLING. In a fortnight.

SOPHY. Oh, my poor darlin

BASTLING. I must see her morrow. I've something se propose to her.

SOPHY [half in eagerness, half Have you?

BASTLING. But to-morrow be alone, Sophy; I can't sa have to say in a few hasty whis all your girls flitting about — haps a customer or two here.

SOPHY. Without me?

BASTLING. Surely you can To-morrow at twelve. You'l it?

SOPHY. How can I — alone

BASTLING. You're our onl Think!

SOPHY [glancing suddenly t left]. Valma's rooms!

[FRAYNE has wandered t of the circular table, and his eyeglass, is again

SOPHY. QUEX now j

BASTLING [perceiving th SOPHY]. Look out!

SOPHY [taking a bottle from h raising her voice]. You'll re perfume in the course of the a [Replacing the bottle upon t Shall I do your nails?

BASTLING. Thanks.

[They move away. H place in the screen-ch sits facing him. D process of manicuring together earnestly]

FRAYNE [eyeing SOPHY]. shapely. Slim but shapely.

[MISS MOON enters, wi of water. Having ad bowl upon the arm of t chair, she retires]

FRAYNE. There's another Plain. [Watching Miss Moo goes out] I don't know — rat ing. [Finding QUEX by his s your pardon.

QUEX. Didn't hear you.

FRAYNE. Glad of it. At time, old friend, you will forgi remarking that a man's virtuo

must be — ha, ha! — somewhat hey? — when he flinches at the admiration of beauty on the part of a connoisseur though that paltriness is.

K. Oh, my dear Chick, my intentions are firm enough.

FRAYNE [*dubiously*]. H'm!

K. And my prudery is consistent with the most laudable intentions, I assure you. But the fact is, dear chap, I'm afraid and trembling —

FRAYNE. Ah!

K. No, no, not for my strength alone — fear lest any trivial act of mine, however guileless; the most innocence in the direction of a decent woman; should be misinterpreted by the good ladies in whose hands I have placed myself — especially Aunt Julia. You remember Lady Owbridge?

FRAYNE. Why did you intrust yourself to her?

K. My one chance! [*Taking a seat at the table, against which they were leaning — his voice falling into a strain of tenderness*] Chick, I fell in love with Miss Eden —

FRAYNE [*in sentimental retrospection*]. Ah! love! what memories are awakened by the dear old phrase!

K [*dryly*]. Yes. Will you talk to me of your love-affairs, Chick, or shall I?

FRAYNE. Certainly — you. Go on,

K. When I proposed marriage to Miss Eden — it was at the hunt-ball at Owbridge —

FRAYNE [*his eyes sparkling*]. Did you not retire to a corner — with flowers — and a chance?

K. There were flowers.

FRAYNE. I know — I know! Nearly ten years ago, and the faint scent of *Ardenia Florida* remains in my memory!

K. Quite so. Would you like to hear of mine?

FRAYNE [*sitting*]. No, no — you. Go on, me. You go on.

K [*sitting on the edge of the table, leaning down upon FRAYNE*]. When I proposed to Miss Eden I was certain — I was certain that my infernal evil character —

FRAYNE. Ah, yes. I've always been a deal more artful than you, and a deal more of your little amours. [*Chuckling*] Ha, ha! devilish cunning!

QUEX. And I was right. Her first words were, "Think of your life; how can you ask this of me?" — her first words and her last, that evening. I was desperate, Chick, for I — well, I'm hit, you know.

FRAYNE. What did you do?

QUEX. Came to town by the first train in the morning — drove straight off to Richmond, to my pious aunt. Found her in bed with asthma; I got her up. And I almost went down on my knees to her, Chick.

FRAYNE. Not really?

QUEX. I did — old man as I am! no, I'm not old.

FRAYNE. Forty-eight. Ha, ha! I'm only forty-five.

QUEX. But you've had malaria —

FRAYNE. Dry up, Harry!

QUEX. So we're quits. Well, down on my marrow-bones I went, metaphorically, and there and then I made my vows to old Aunt Julia, and craved her help; and she dropped tears on me, Chick, like a mother. And the result was that within a month I became engaged to Miss Eden.

FRAYNE. The young lady soon waived her —

QUEX [*getting off the table*]. I beg your pardon — the young lady did nothing of the kind. But with Aunt Julia's aid I showed 'em all that it was a genuine case of done with the old life — a real, genuine instance. [*Balancing upon the back of the chair*] I've sold my house in Norfolk Street.

FRAYNE. You'll want one.

QUEX [*gravely*]. Not that one — for Muriel. [*Brightly*] And I'm living separately at Richmond, under Aunt Julia's wing. Muriel is staying at Fauncey Court too just now; she's up from Norfolk for the Season, chaperoned by Mrs. Jack. [*Sitting, nursing his knee, with a sigh of content*] Ah! after all, it's very pleasant to be a good boy.

FRAYNE. When is it to take place?

QUEX. At the end of the year; assuming, of course —

FRAYNE. That you continue to behave prettily? [*QUEX assents with a wave of the hand*] The slightest lapse on your part —?

QUEX. Impossible.

FRAYNE. But it would —?

QUEX [*a little impatiently*]. Naturally.

FRAYNE. Well, six months pass quickly — everywhere but on the West Coast of Africa.

QUEX. And then — you shall be my best man, Chick, if you're still home.

FRAYNE [*rising*]. Hah! I never thought

QUEX [*rising*]. No; I who always laughed at marriage as a dull depravity permitted to the respectable classes! I who always maintained that man's whole duty to woman — meaning his mistress — that a man's duty to a woman is liberally discharged when he has made a settlement on her, or stuck her into his Will! [*Blowing the ideas from him*] Phugh!

[*He goes to the little table, and examines the objects upon it*]

FRAYNE [*following him*]. Talking of ah — mistress, I suppose you've — ?

QUEX. Oh, yes, they're all —

FRAYNE. Made happy and comfortable?

QUEX. I've done my utmost.

FRAYNE. Mrs. — ?

QUEX [*rather irritably*]. I say, all of them.

FRAYNE. No trouble with Lady — ?

QUEX. No, no, no, no.

FRAYNE. What about the little Duchess? [QUEX *pauses in his examination of a nail-clipper*] Eh?

QUEX [*turning to him, slightly embarrassed*]. Odd that you should mention her.

FRAYNE. Why?

QUEX. She's staying at Fauncey Court also.

FRAYNE. The Duchess!

QUEX. She proposed herself for a visit. I dared not raise any objection, for her reputation's sake; the ladies would have suspected at once. You're one of the few, Chick, who ever got an inkling of that business.

FRAYNE. Very awkward!

QUEX. No. She's behaving admirably. [*Thoughtfully with a wry face*] Of course she was always a little romantic and sentimental.

FRAYNE. By gad, though, what an alluring woman!

QUEX [*shortly*]. Perhaps.

FRAYNE. Ho, come! you don't mean to tell me — ?

QUEX [*with dignity*]. Yes, I do — upon my honour, I've forgotten. [*The door-gong sounds*] This must be the ladies.

[MURIEL EDEN *enters, followed by* MISS CLARIDGE. MURIEL *is a tall, fresh-*

looking, girlish young woman dressed. SOPHY *risks and n*

MURIEL [*behind the circular to SOPHY, breathlessly, as if exertion of running upstairs*]

Sophy! [*Looking round*]

QUEX — ? [*SOPHY glances*]

QUEX, *who advances* Oh, y

QUEX Lady Owbridge and M

won't lag upstairs just now.

waiting for you in the carria

asked me to say.

QUEX [*in tender solicitation*].

in the Bulrushes? You still

have your nails cut?

MURIEL. Thanks, I [*with c*]

— I've already seen the picture

QUEX. And its merits

sufficient — ?

MURIEL [*guiltily*]. I thou

bulrushes rather well done.

QUEX. May I present my ol

Sir Chichester Frayne?

MURIEL. [*To FRAYNE*] E

you do?

QUEX. [*To FRAYNE*] Will y

Chick? [*To MURIEL*] We

back very soon.

[MURIEL *nods to QU*]

FRAYNE *and turns aw*

window, removing he

SOPHY *joins her*]

FRAYNE. [*To QUEX*] As I s

— the typical, creamy English g

all do it! we all come to that, s

later.

QUEX [*looking from MU*]

FRAYNE, *proudly*]. Well — ?

FRAYNE [*in answer, kissing h*]

tips to the air]. Alluring!

QUEX. Ha! [*Hastily*] We

ing the ladies waiting.

[*He goes out.* FRAYNE

ing QUEX, when he e

MISS CLARIDGE. He

gazing at her admiring

door-gong sounds]

MISS CLARIDGE [*surprised*].

wish anything, sir?

FRAYNE [*with a little sigh of*]

Ah — h!

MISS CLARIDGE [*coldly*]. Sh

your nails?

FRAYNE [*wofully*]. That's

young lady — you can't!

MISS CLARIDGE [*with hauteur*]

Why not, sir?

FRAYNE. I regret to say I b

[*He goes out.* MISS C

titters loudly to MISS I

[To MISS CLARIDGE, reprov-
Miss Claridge! I don't require
resent.

[MISS CLARIDGE *withdraws*]
[*going to* MISS LIMBIRD]. Miss
will you oblige me? hot water,

MISS LIMBIRD *goes out*. At once
SOPHY gives a signal to BAST-
LING and MURIEL, and keeps
guard. BASTLING and MURIEL
talk in low, hurried tones]

ING [on the right of the circular
How are you?

EL [on the other side, giving him
across the table]. I don't know.
wing her hand] I hate myself!

ING. Hate yourself?

EL. For this sort of thing.
round apprehensively]. Oh!

ING. Don't be frightened.
there.

EL. I'm nervous — shaky.
wrote to you last night I thought
be able to sneak up to town
ning only with a maid. And
net Quex too!

ING. None of them sus-
--?

EL. No. Oh, but go now!

ING. Already! may I not sit
ch you?

EL. Not to-day.

ING. You must hear my news,
om Sophy; she'll tell you —

EL. News?

[turning to them sharply]. Hsst!

EL. Good-by!

ING [grasping her arm]. Haven't
loving little speech for me?

[behind the table]. Gar—r—rh!

He releases MURIEL and picks up
a large wooden bowl of bath-
soap, just as MISS LIMBIRD
re-enters with the hot water.

MURIEL moves away, hastily]

x. [To BASTLING, taking the
om him — raising her voice]

you — much obliged. [Trans-
he soap to MISS LIMBIRD and re-
her of the bowl of water]

For Bastling, with a bottle of
Lilas.

MISS LIMBIRD returns to her
desk; SOPHY deposits the bowl
of water upon the arm of the
screen-chair; BASTLING fetches
his hat, and gives some direc-
tions to MISS LIMBIRD]

EL. [To SOPHY, in a whisper]
these extravagances on his

part! I am the cause of them! he is
not in the least well off!

SOPHY. Don't worry; it's all booked.
Ha, ha! bless him, he'll never get his
account from me! [BASTLING, with a
parting glance in the direction of MURIEL
and SOPHY, goes out] He's gone.

[MISS LIMBIRD also goes out,
carrying the bowl of bath-soap]

MURIEL [with a sigh of relief]. Oh!

SOPHY [coming to her]. We're by our-
selves for a minute. Give me a good
hug. [Embracing her] My dear! my
darling! ha, ha, ha! you shall be the
first to hear of it — I'm engaged.

MURIEL. Sophy! to whom?

SOPHY. To Mr. Valma, the great
palmist.

MURIEL. What, the young man
you've talked to me about — next
door? [Kissing her] I hope you are
doing well for yourself, dear.

SOPHY. He's simply perfect! he's — I
oh, how can I be such a brute, talking
of my own happiness —! [In an al-
tered tone] Darling, Captain Bastling's
regiment is going to be sent off to
Hong-Kong.

MURIEL [after a pause — command-
ing herself]. When?

SOPHY. In about a fortnight.

MURIEL [frigidly]. Is this what you
had to tell me, from him?

SOPHY. Yes, and that he must see
you to-morrow, alone. I'll arrange
it. Can you manage to be here at
twelve?

MURIEL. I daresay, somehow.

SOPHY [looking at her in surprise].
I thought you'd be more upset.

MURIEL [taking SOPHY's hand]. The
truth is, Sophy — I'm glad.

SOPHY. Glad!

MURIEL. Awfully glad the chance
has come of putting an end to all this.
Oh, I've been treating him shockingly!

SOPHY. Him?

MURIEL. Lord Quex.

SOPHY [impatiently]. Oh! pooh!

MURIEL [leaving SOPHY]. Yes, after
to-morrow he sha'n't find me looking
a guilty fool whenever he speaks to me
— by Jove, he sha'n't! I believe he
guessed I haven't seen Moses in the
Bulrushes!

SOPHY. But, dear, how do you know
what Captain Bastling means to say to
you to-morrow?

MURIEL [pausing in her walk]. To
say? — good-by.

SOPHY. Suppose he asks you to put

him out of his misery — marry him directly, on the quiet?

MURIEL [*a little unsteadily*]. Then I shall tell him finally — my word is given to Lord Quex.

SOPHY [*coming to her again*]. Given! — wrung out of you. And just for that you'll lose the chance of being happy — all your life — with the man you —

[*She turns away, and sits, on the right of the circular table, blowing her nose*]

MURIEL [*at SOPHY'S side, desperately*]. But I tell you, Sophy, I love Lord Quex.

SOPHY. You may tell me.

MURIEL. I do — I mean, I'm getting to. [*Defiantly*] At any rate, I am proud of him.

SOPHY. Proud!

MURIEL. Certainly — proud that he has mended his ways for my sake.

SOPHY [*between tears and anger*]. Mended his ways! with those eyes of his!

MURIEL [*looking down upon SOPHY, wondering*]. His eyes? why, they are considered his best feature.

SOPHY. I never saw wickeder eyes. All my girls say the same.

MURIEL [*with rising indignation*]. I am sure you have never detected Lord Quex looking at anybody in a way he should not.

SOPHY. Oh, I admit he has always behaved in a gentlemanly manner toward me and my girls.

MURIEL [*haughtily*]. Toward you and your —! Sophy, pray remember Lord Quex's rank.

SOPHY [*in hot scorn*]. His rank! ha! do you think his lordship has ever let that interfere —?

[*She checks herself, finding MURIEL staring at her*]

MURIEL [*in horror*]. Sophy!

SOPHY [*discomposed — rising*]. Er — if I'm to do anything to your nails —

[*As SOPHY is moving toward the manicure-table, MURIEL intercepts her*]

MURIEL. You are surely not suggesting that Lord Quex has ever descended —?

SOPHY [*hastily*]. No, no, no. [*Brushing past MURIEL and seating herself before the screen-chair*] Come; they'll all be here directly.

MURIEL [*sitting in the screen-chair*]. Sophy, you have heard some story —

SOPHY [*examining MURIEL*]. A little varnishing is all you need. MURIEL. You shall tell me. SOPHY [*proceeding with methodically*]. It's nothing more sorry I —

MURIEL [*imperatively*]. So!

SOPHY [*reluctantly*]. Oh, well, when I was at Mr. Beau Grosvenor Street —

MURIEL. Yes.

SOPHY. A Lady Pumphrey stay there with a goodish-looking — Edith Smith her name was.

MURIEL. Never mind her.

SOPHY. And they'd lately Quex in a country-house in Wiltshire. Well, he had kissed her — admitted it.

MURIEL. Kissed whom Pumphrey?

SOPHY. Oh, of course he kissed Lady Pumphrey; but he kissed afterward, when he tipped her — told me what he said.

MURIEL. What did he say?

SOPHY. He said, "There's something for yourself, my girl."

MURIEL [*starting to her feet, and running away*]. My heavens! what next am I to hear — his seuse? [*Sinking into a chair*] dear!

SOPHY [*turning in her chair*]. MURIEL]. It's one thing I meant to keep to myself.

MURIEL [*bitterly*]. Still, you promised to forgive him for kissing already! And, after all, this is a long while ago.

SOPHY [*thoughtfully*]. Yes, I suppose if you *did* find him doing that sort of thing now, you'd tell me would you do?

MURIEL. Do! [*With all her might*] Marry Napier Bastling.

SOPHY [*rising — a mischievous look in her eyes*]. Ah —! I almost wish it would happen!

MURIEL. Sophy!

SOPHY [*leaning against the circular table, gripping MURIEL's hand*]. Just for your sake, darling. [*In a low voice*] I almost wish I could kiss across him in some quiet little spot —

MURIEL [*looking up at SOPHY*]. What!

SOPHY. In one of those green rooms you've told me of, at Faunce. [*Between her teeth*] If he ever

and I told you of it, you'd take
d for it, wouldn't you?

MURIEL *[starting to her feet]*. For
how dare you let such an idea
your head? you, a respectable
t engaged yourself —!

FRAYNE *[with a quick look toward the
]. Oh, yes! hush! [Clapping
d to her mouth]* Oh, what would
say if he knew I'd talked in this
[The door-gong sounds]

MURIEL. Here they are.

FRAYNE *[as they hastily return to their
Darling, I was only thinking
and the poor Captain. [With
glance toward the window]* Phew!
alma knew!

*They resume their seats, and the
manicuring is continued]*

LIMBIRD enters, preceding LORD
EX and the COUNTESS OF OW-
BRIDGE, MRS. JACK EDEN, and
FRAYNE. MISS MOON follows.
LADY OWBRIDGE is a very old lady
a mouse-coloured wig, with a pale,
sious face, watery eyes, and no
brows. MRS. EDEN is an ultra-
tionably-dressed woman of about
ty, shrill and maniéré]

*[To LADY OWBRIDGE, who is
arm]. Yes, a curious phase of
life. Many people come to
aces for rest.*

OWBRIDGE *[looking about her
gly]*. For rest, Henry?

EDEN. Certainly. I know a woman
w a woman who used to declare
t sole repose during the Season
half-hour with the manicurist.

EDEN. How are you, Sophy?

FRAYNE. How are you to-day, Mrs.

EDEN. Lady Owbridge, this is
ullgarney, whom you've heard

SOPHY rises, makes a bob, and
sits again]

OWBRIDGE *[seated]*. I hope
quite well, my dear.

FRAYNE *[busy over MURIEL's nails]*.
my lady; I hope you're tho

EDEN *[sitting]*. What is your
of the picture, Lady Owbridge?

OWBRIDGE *[not hearing]*. Eh?

EDEN. Moses in the Bulrushes
you think of it?

OWBRIDGE *[tearfully]*. They
ch subjects nowadays with too
verence.

FRAYNE *[thoughtlessly]*. Too much
Pharaoh's daughter and too little Moses.

QUEX *[frowning him down]*. Phsst!

MRS. EDEN. Certainly the hand-
maidens remind one of the young ladies
in the ballet at the Empire.

LADY OWBRIDGE. The Empire?

MRS. EDEN *[checking herself]*.
Oh —!

QUEX. Popular place of entertain-
ment.

LADY OWBRIDGE. Ah? The only
place of that kind I have visited for
some years is the Imperial Institute.

*[MRS. EDEN rises, laughing to
herself, and joins SOPHY and
MURIEL. FRAYNE is now estab-
lishing cordial relations between
himself and MISS MOON]*

MRS. EDEN. *[To SOPHY]* Well,
Sophy, and how's your business getting
along?

LADY OWBRIDGE. *[To QUEX, after
ascertaining that FRAYNE is not near her]*
Oh, Henry, I have asked Sir Chichester
to drive down to us to-night, to dine.

QUEX *[watching FRAYNE with appre-
hension]*. Ah, yes, delightful. *[Trying
to gain FRAYNE's attention — warningly]*
Phsst! phsst!

LADY OWBRIDGE *[plucking at QUEX's
coat]* I feel that Sir Chichester is a
very wholesome friend for you, Henry.

QUEX. Very. Phsst!

LADY OWBRIDGE. What is the name
of the West African place? — Uumbos
— Uumbos seems to have improved
him vastly.

QUEX *[in a low voice]*. Chichester!

LADY OWBRIDGE. And it is our wish
that you should associate for the future
only with gray-haired men.

*[MISS MOON now withdraws, with
FRAYNE at her heels]*

MURIEL *[rising and coming to LADY
OWBRIDGE]*. I'm ready, dear Lady
Owbridge. Look! you can see your
face in them.

*[LADY OWBRIDGE rises; MURIEL
displays her nails. LADY OW-
BRIDGE shakes her head gravely,
while QUEX bends over MU-
RIEL's hands gallantly]*

MRS. EDEN. *[To SOPHY]* My hands
need trimming-up desperately badly.
That maid of mine is a fool at fingers.

SOPHY. Can't you stay now?

MRS. EDEN *[with an impatient move-
ment of the head toward LADY OWBRIDGE]*.
Oh, lord, no. *[Suddenly]* I say, I wish
you'd run down to Richmond, to

Fauncey Court, and do me. Could you?

SOPHY [*innocently*]. Oh, yes.

MRS. EDEN. To-night, before dinner?

SOPHY. I think I can.

MRS. EDEN. [*To LADY OWBRIDGE*]. Lady Owbridge, Miss Fullgarney is coming down to Richmond this evening to manœuvre me. Do, do, do let her give your nails the fashionable cut. [*Going to QUEX and MURIEL*] Everybody is wearing pointed nails this Season.

LADY OWBRIDGE [*advancing to SOPHY*]. Ah, no, no. These practices are somewhat shocking to an old woman. [*To SOPHY*] But I don't blame you. [*Laying her hand upon SOPHY's arm, kindly*] So you're Miss Eden's foster-sister, eh?

SOPHY. I've that honour, my lady.

LADY OWBRIDGE. You look a little thin. Come down to Fauncey Court to-day as soon as your duties will release you. Spend as many hours there as you can.

SOPHY. Oh, my lady!

LADY OWBRIDGE. Run about the grounds — go wherever you please; and get the air into your lungs. [*With gracious formality*] Remember, I invite you.

MURIEL [*innocently*]. How good of you, Lady Owbridge!

SOPHY. Thank you, my lady.

[FRAYNE returns — accompanied by MISS MOON, who carries a neat package — and settles an account with MISS LIMBIRD at the desk]

LADY OWBRIDGE. [*To SOPHY*] You shall be well looked after.

[*She shakes hands with FRAYNE*]

MURIEL [*kissing SOPHY*]. We shall meet by-and-by.

LADY OWBRIDGE. Muriel — young people —

[MURIEL joins LADY OWBRIDGE; they go out together]

MRS. EDEN [*nodding to SOPHY*]. This evening, Sophy.

SOPHY [*in a flutter of simple pleasure*]. Yes, Mrs. Eden.

MRS. EDEN [*shaking hands with FRAYNE*]. Till dinner —

[*She goes out*]

QUEX. [*To SOPHY*] Good-by, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY [*tripping across the room*]. Good-day, my lord.

QUEX [*joining FRAYNE*]. Are you coming, Chick?

FRAYNE [*taking the parcel from* MOON — and turning to QUEX *bitterly*]. I say, that gal has buy something I don't want to stick you here frightfully —

QUEX. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

[*They go out*]

SOPHY [*adjusting her hair at*]. Come, girls! look alive! no idling for me to-day! I'm off home in my frock. I've got an invite to Richmond. My hat and coat

[*The door-gong sounds*]
MOON disappears at
in the partition. MISS
enters]

SOPHY. Miss Hud-delle, please next door, and ask Mr. Valma this way for a moment.

MISS HUDDLE. He's on to Miss Fullgarney, smoking a cigar.

SOPHY [*running across to the door*]. Get my bag of tools ready! [*MISS HUDDLE and MISS LIMBIRD out*]; SOPHY opens the window
Valma! Valma! Valma!

[*MISS MOON returns with hat, coat, gloves, and valise*]

MISS MOON. Your things, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY [*taking them from her*]. for a hansom — a smart one.

[*MISS MOON runs out and enters at the window*]

SOPHY [*breathlessly*]. Valma, love! I've got an invite down to Richmond — Lady Owbridge — she means specially! I'm going home to place to smarten-up. Isn't that so? [*In an outburst*] Oh, love, you give-up for to-day, and take me

VALMA. May I?

SOPHY. May you! Your things, your hat! you'll find me outside the cab.

[*He hurries*]

[*MISS LIMBIRD, carrying her bag, enters, followed by*]

CLARIDGE and MISS

SOPHY [*as she, with the aid of pins on her hat and scrambles for her coat*]. You know, girls, man's person's head would be turned if I was asked to a place like Fauncey Court as a guest, bear in mind. But in the houses I've been in! — it's no matter. Still, specially invited Countess of Owbridge herself — putting her feet in turn upon a carpet — hitching up her stockings! I must make rather a favour of me to Mrs. Jack. One doesn't go

Mrs. Jack's claws. Gloves! goodness, the evenings are long! it's simply heavenly at Fauncey — simply heaven — [She breaks abruptly, staring straight before her under her breath] Oh—! Fauncey — Lord Quex —!

CLARIDGE. What's the matter, ullgarney?

Y. N—n—nothing.

MOON [entering]. Cab, Miss ney!

Y [in an altered voice]. Bag. kes her bag from MISS LIMBIRD lks away, rather slowly, with her own. Quietly, without turning] a in the morning, girls.

FOUR GIRLS. Good-afternoon, ullgarney. [SOPHY goes out]

END OF THE FIRST ACT

ACT II

ne represents a portion of an English garden laid out in Italian fashion. At the extreme back — on ground slightly raised — two cypress hedges, about sixteen feet high, form an alley running from right to left. In the centre of the alley which is nearer the spectator there is an opening, and at this opening are three or four steps connecting the higher with the lower level. Beyond the alley nothing is seen but sky and some tree-tops. In advance is an enclosure formed by a dwarf cypress-hedge, about four feet high, also broken in the centre by an opening, and running off right and left at a sharp angle. On the outside of the dwarf hedge is a walk; and beyond, on the right and left, are trees. Within the enclosure, on the left, is a small fountain; facing the fountain, on the right, a piece of old, broken sculpture. Other bits of antique sculpture are placed in different parts of the garden. In the foreground, on the right toward the centre, stands a stone bench, on the left of which is a table upon which are the remains of "afternoon tea," and a garden-chair. A similar stone bench stands opposite.

ht is that of a very fine evening.

OWBRIDGE is in the garden-chair asleep, an open book in her lap.

QUEX and MURIEL stand, talking together, by the fountain. On the right-hand stone bench the DUCHESS OF STROOD and MRS. EDEN are seated. The DUCHESS is a daintily beautiful doll of about seven-and-thirty — a poseuse, outwardly dignified and stately when upon her guard, really a frail, shallow little creature full of extravagant sentimentality. Until LADY OWBRIDGE wakes, the conversation is carried on in subdued tones]

MRS. EDEN [indicating MURIEL and QUEX]. They make a fascinating couple, don't they, Duchess?

DUCHESS [with placid melancholy]. To see two people on the threshold of wedlock is always painfully interesting.

MRS. EDEN. I am quite triumphant about it. It is such a delightful engagement, now that the horrid difficulties are smoothed away.

DUCHESS. Yes, you were telling me of some sad obstacles

MRS. EDEN. I nearly perished of them! [Very confidentially] There's no doubt, you know, that his past has been exceptionally naughty.

DUCHESS. Really? Ah! don't be surprised that I am not more deeply shocked. In these surroundings it is hard to realize that every aspect of life is not as lovely as [pointing to the foliage] — the tones of those exquisite, deep greens, for example.

MRS. EDEN. However, the dear thing is going to be so good in the future. [Turning to the DUCHESS] I keep forgetting — Lord Quex is a very old friend of yours?

DUCHESS [serenely]. An acquaintance of many years' standing. But since his Grace has been an invalid we have lived much abroad, or in seclusion, and gossip has not reached us. Alas, you find me a ready subject à désillusionner! [Rising] We are in the sun. Shall we walk?

MRS. EDEN [sympathetically, as they walk]. Is his Grace still very unwell?

DUCHESS [smiling sadly upon MRS. EDEN]. He is still over seventy.

[They wander away, through the trees, as QUEX and MURIEL leave the fountain]

QUEX [with tender playfulness, first glancing at the sleeping LADY OWBRIDGE]. And so 'all these good things are to befall me after to-morrow?

MURIEL [*in a low voice*]. After to-morrow.

QUEX. When I approach, I shall no longer see you skim away into the far vista of those alleys, or shrink back into the shadows of the corridors [*prostrately*] after to-morrow.

MURIEL. No — not after to-morrow.

QUEX. In place of a cold word, a chilling phrase, & warm one — after to-morrow.

MURIEL. I am going to try.

QUEX. If I touch your hand, you'll not slip it behind your back in a hurry [*touching her hand*] — ?

MURIEL [*withdrawing it*]. Not after to-morrow.

[*She sits; he stands behind the stone bench, leaning over the back of it*]

QUEX. But why, may I ask, is this bliss reserved till after to-morrow?

MURIEL. I had rather you did not ask me, Quex.

QUEX. No? I see, I am a day too soon in putting even that little question.

MURIEL. Ah, I'll tell you this — I am going to turn over a new leaf, after to-morrow.

QUEX. You! your pages are all milk-white. What can you detect upon one of them to induce you to turn it?

MURIEL [*gazing into space*]. I — I've been scribbling there — scriawling — drawing pictures —

QUEX. Pictures — of what?

MURIEL. You shall know, perhaps, some day.

QUEX. After to-morrow?

MURIEL. Yes, Quex, but — after many to-morrows.

[*Two men-servants — an old man and a young one — descend the steps and proceed to remove the tea things*]

LADY OWBRIDGE [*making*]. Eh — ? [*Seeing MURIEL and QUEX*] Ah, my dears — ! I am reading such an absorbing book.

MURIEL [*by her side, taking the book*]. May I — ?

LADY OWBRIDGE. You should study the Dean of St. Olpherts' sermons — and you, Henry.

QUEX [*taking the book from MURIEL and turning its pages*]. Yes, I must — I must —

LADY OWBRIDGE. By the way, has anything been seen of that nice young manœuvre girl, Miss Sophy — something — ?

MURIEL. Sophy Fullgarne arrived at about half-past four asked Mrs. Gregory to show the house. I thought you were object.

LADY OWBRIDGE. Object! I see.

MURIEL. She is roving all the grounds now.

LADY OWBRIDGE. An exceedingly young woman, of

[*The servants have gone steps, carrying the tea*]

THE ELDER SERVANT [*looks the alley toward the left*]. I saw the person, my lady.

LADY OWBRIDGE. I'll speak to Bristow.

[*The elder servant goes on the left; the younger one, carrying the tray, to the right*]
DUCHESS and Mrs. J. turn, above the low hedge; QUEX meets the

MURIEL. I would not have but the young man she is engaged brought her down, and I took myself to give him permission to

LADY OWBRIDGE. Oh, is Mr. Fullgarne engaged?

MURIEL. To Mr. Valm palmist.

Mrs. EDEN [*approaching*]. the palmist!

LADY OWBRIDGE. What is a pray?

MURIEL. He reads your present your future in the lines of your

Mrs. EDEN. Oh, do let us I into the drawing-room after. I hear he is simply charming.

LADY OWBRIDGE. Charming! What are our ladies for? Dear, dear me! in my day such and superstitions were entirely confined to the kitchen.

[*MURIEL joins the I*
QUEX is dutifully looking the book of sermons, and returns, followed by and then returns; Sophy forward, beamingly, prettily dressed, but colors]

SOPHY. [*To LADY OWBRIDGE*] I am, my lady. I'm having good time!

LADY OWBRIDGE. That's right.

SOPHY. Oh, this garden! It well call it heavenly.

OWBRIDGE. They ought not to that, my dear. But it is indeed earthly notice.

Y. It must be. And what a or a bicycle!

EDEN [*reprovingly*]. Bicycles are loved to enter these grounds,

Y [*sobered*]. Oh ——!

OWBRIDGE. Miss Eden tells are accompanied by the young to whom you are engaged to be

Y. I hope I haven't taken too liberty

OWBRIDGE [*looking round*]. I see him.

Y. He has run back to the I've just found out I left my the fly that brought us here. So of me!

OWBRIDGE. Mrs. Gregory will u, both, dinner.

Y. Thank you, my lady.

[The DUCHESS is now seated in the garden-chair. The younger of the two servants enters, carrying Sophy's bag and the evening papers]

YANT [*handing the bag to SOPHY*]. Miss has brought your bag

Y. There now! Much obliged. Mrs. Eden! Poor Mr. Valma will be tramp for nothing, won't he?

[SOPHY and Mrs. EDEN talk together]

OWBRIDGE. The evening Morgan?

YANT [*who has laid the papers upon*]. Yes, my lady.

[The servant retires]

OWBRIDGE. So late? we must and dress.

EDEN [*who has been occupied in*]. I'll follow you, dear

LADY OWBRIDGE moves away and is joined by Mrs. EDEN

Mrs. EDEN [*as she ascends the steps*]. Sophy, I shall

Y. All right, Mrs. Eden.

LADY OWBRIDGE and Mrs. EDEN disappear

YANT [*crossing to SOPHY*]. Wouldn't like to walk to the gates to meet

Y. Thanks, dear, I think I

MURIEL. I can show you a nearer way than by going back to the house. [*Pointing into the distance*] Follow this hedge and take the second alley — not the first — on your left. When you reach the big fountain

[QUEX, still dipping into the sermons, has come down to the back of the table. He now throws the book upon the table and picks up a newspaper]

QUEX. I beg your pardon, Duchess I didn't see you.

DUCHESS [*in a whisper*]. Harry

QUEX [*startled*]. Oh?

DUCHESS. I will hurry into my gown and return. He here in a quarter of an hour.

QUEX. May I ask — the reason?

DUCHESS [*a newspaper in her hand talking to him, in undertones, over the top of it*]. For a week, only the most commonplace have passed between us. I must relieve my heart; it is bursting!

QUEX. I entreat you to consider my position.

DUCHESS. Yours! have I no reputation to endanger? [*Glancing — laying the paper aside*] What a pitifully small request! you will grant it?

QUEX. If you could see your way to excuse me —

DUCHESS. In memory of the past — I demand it!

QUEX [*with a stiff bow*]. Oh — oh, certainly.

DUCHESS [*leaving him*]. Thank you.

QUEX. [*To himself*] Damn!

[He turns on his heel and walks away]

DUCHESS [*joining MURIEL*]. You are coming to dress?

MURIEL [*after smiling assent, presenting SOPHY*]. Miss Fullgurney was my first playmate, Duchess.

DUCHESS [*looking upon SOPHY graciously*]. Ah? [*To MURIEL*] This remembrance of childhood are sweet, are they not?

[She slips her arm through MURIEL'S, and they ascend the steps and go away together. SOPHY comes to the stone bench on the left, upon which she deposits her bag. She opens the bag, produces a little mirror and a comb, and puts her "fringe" in order — humming as she does an air from the latest comic opera. Then she returns the comb and mirror to the bag, and — lay in

hand — prepares to depart. While this is going on QUEX returns, above the low hedge. He ascends the steps and looks off into the distance, watching the retreating figure of the DUCHESS. After a moment or two he shrugs his shoulders in a perplexed, troubled way, and, coming down the steps, encounters SOPHY]

SOPHY [innocently]. Lovely evening, my lord.

QUEX [passing her, with a nod and a smile]. Very — very.

[At the table, he exchanges the newspaper he carries for another. She is going in the direction indicated by MURIEL. Suddenly she pauses, above the dwarf cypress hedge, and stands looking at QUEX with an expression in which fear and determination are mingled. Having selected his newspaper, QUEX crosses to the left and sits, reading]

SOPHY [coming to him]. I don't think I shall go, after all.

QUEX [lowering his paper]. Eh?

SOPHY. I was just starting off down to the gates, you know, to meet Mr. Valma.

QUEX [with amiable indifference]. Oh?

SOPHY [her head upon one side, smiling]. But it's too hot for walking, isn't it?

QUEX [resuming his reading]. It is warm.

SOPHY [putting her bag upon the table and removing her gloves]. Phew!

[She eyes him askance, undecided as to a plan of action. He lowers his paper again, disconcerting her]

QUEX. You don't feel you ought to go and meet your — Mr. Valma?

SOPHY [edging toward him]. I might miss him — mightn't I?

QUEX. Certainly — you might.

SOPHY. Besides, it wouldn't do for me to attend upon Mrs. Jack — Mrs. Eden — all puffing and towzelled; [archly] now, would it?

QUEX [resuming his reading]. You're the best judge.

SOPHY. So I've a quarter of an hour to fill in somehow. [A pause] I've a quarter of an hour to fill in somehow.

QUEX [behind his paper, beginning to be extremely bored.] Indeed?

SOPHY [quaking]. I — I wish were some quiet little shady place to ramble about in, here at Faunce.

QUEX. There are several.

SOPHY. Are there? . . . are

QUEX [turning his paper]. Oh, great many.

SOPHY. You see, I'm a stranger.

QUEX [kindly]. Well, you run, you'll find 'em. [She walks away, baffled. He glances at her over his shoulder, slightly puzzled] Have you seen the grotto?

SOPHY [turning sharply]. No.

QUEX [pointing toward the right]. It's in that direction.

SOPHY. Grotto? Dark, I like it, and lonelyish?

QUEX. You said you desired a quiet and quiet.

SOPHY. Yes, but not dark. Fancy me in a grotto all by myself by myself . . . !

QUEX [behind his paper again]. I'm afraid I have no further suggestions to offer.

[There is another pause; the face lights up, and she glances down to him swiftly]

SOPHY [close to him]. Show me the nails, my lord.

QUEX [lowering his paper]. My lord.

SOPHY [taking his hand and examining it]. Excuse me. Oh, my lord, shame!

QUEX. You take exception to my nails?

SOPHY. This is hacking, not hacking. You ought never to be allowed to show a mile of a pair of scissors.

QUEX [looking at his other hand]. Come! they're hardly as bad as yours.

SOPHY [examining that hand]. Ha, ha, ha!

QUEX [rising, somewhat abashed]. I confess I am a little unskilful in my operations.

SOPHY. No gentleman should show to himself where his nails are cut. Why, a man's hand has lost its value, young lady's affections before. I've heard of heaps of cases where matches have been broken off —

QUEX [putting his hands behind him, smiling]. Really? the results of my curing are more far-reaching than I imagined.

SOPHY. You see, my lord, a man's courting he is free to choose; a young lady in the face for as long as she chooses; it's considered proper and attentive. But the girl is expected

her eyes, and then — what has
look at? Why, a well-trimmed
or an ugly one. [*Taking off her*
Now then, I'll do wonders for
ten minutes.

EX. Thank you; I am not going
s just yet.

HY. No need to go indoors.
itting her rings upon the table and
g her bag] I've got my bag here,
all my tools — see!

EX. Ah, but I won't trouble you
evening. Another occasion —

HY [*arranging her manicure instru-
etc., upon the table*]. No trouble
my lord — quite an honour. [*In-
g the stone bench*] Please sit
there. [*Producing a little brass*
Water —?]

[*She runs to the fountain and fills
her bowl from its basin*]

EX [*crossing, hesitatingly, to the
— looking at his nails and speaking
formal manner*]. You have been
a to Fauncey Court for rest and
tion, Miss Fullgarney; it is most
g of you to allow your pleasure
disturbed in this way.

HY [*returning to him*]. Oh, don't
at, my lord. [*Putting the bowl
table and dragging the garden-chair
a to face him*] Business is a
re, sometimes.

[*Her close proximity to him forces
him back upon the bench*]

EX [*seated — stiffly*]. You must,
t, let me open an account at your
nt establishment.

HY. Not I. [*Seated — taking his
and*] One may work occasionally
re, I should hope? [*archly*] ha, ha!
r love, eh?

EX [*uncomfortably*]. No, no, I
t permit it — I couldn't permit

HY [*holding his hand almost caress-
Well, well! we'll see — we'll*
She clips his nails briskly and
lically. While she does so she again
a song, looking up at him at inter-
sticingly, under her lashes. Break-
in her song] My goodness! what
oth, young hand you have!

EX [*his discomfort increasing*]. Er
eed?

HY. Many a man of six-and-
y would be glad to own such
I can tell you. [*Patting his hand*
ingly] Keep still! [*It is now his*
o hum a song, which he does, under
ath, to disguise his embarrassment.

She looks up at him] But, then, you're
an awfully young man for your age, in
every way, aren't you?

QUEX [*gazing at the sky*]. Oh, I don't
know about that.

SOPHY [*slyly*]. You do know. [*Wag-
ging her head at him*] You do know.

QUEX [*relaxing slightly*]. It may be
so, of course, without one's being con-
scious of it.

SOPHY. May be so! ah, ha! not
conscious of it! ho! [*Slapping his
hand again, soundly*] Artful!

QUEX [*flattered and amused*]. No, no,
I assure you! ha, ha!

[*They laugh together. His con-
straint gradually diminishes.
After shaking some liquid soap
from a bottle into the bowl, she
places the bowl beside him on
the bench*]

SOPHY [*while doing this*]. My young
ladies at a-hundred-and-eighty-five all
agree with me about you.

QUEX. Do they?

SOPHY. Yes, do they!

QUEX. Your young ladies?

SOPHY. My girls.

QUEX. Ha, ha, ha! And what ter-
rible pronouncement has a-hundred-
and-eighty-five to pass upon me?

SOPHY. Seven-and-thirty, you look
— not a day older; that's what we say.
There, dip your fingers in that, do!

QUEX. Into this?

SOPHY [*thrusting his fingers into the
bowl*]. Baby! [*The water splashes over
her dress and his coat*] Oh!

QUEX. I beg your pardon.

SOPHY. Now what have you done?
[*Wiping the water from his coat*] You
clumsy boy!

QUEX. Thanks, thanks.

[*She commences operations upon
his left hand. He is now
thoroughly entertained by her
freedom and audacity*]

SOPHY. Ha, ha! do you know what
I maintain?

QUEX [*laughing*]. Upon my word, I
dread to think.

SOPHY. Why, that every man who
looks younger than his years should be
watched by the police.

QUEX. Good heavens, Sophy — Miss
Fullgarney!

SOPHY. Yes — as a dangerous
person.

QUEX. Dangerous! ho, come!

SOPHY [*with the suggestion of a wink*].
Dangerous. The man who is younger

than he ought to be is always no better than he should be.

QUEX. Ha, ha, ha!

SOPHY. Am I right? am I right, eh? [*Putting her cheek near his lips — speaking in a low voice, breathlessly, her eyes averted*] Tell me whether I'm right, my lord.

[*For the first time, a suspicion of her designs crosses his mind. He draws back slowly, eyeing her. There is a pause*]

QUEX [*in an altered tone, but keeping her in play*]. Ha, ha, ha, ha! [*Looking at his watch*] I — I am afraid I shall have to run away to dress for dinner very soon.

SOPHY [*resuming her work, disappointed*]. Not yet; you've plenty of time. But there, dangerous or not dangerous, in my heart I can't help holding with what my lady-customers are continually saying.

QUEX [*watching her keenly*]. No? and what are your lady-customers continually saying?

SOPHY. Why, that the young fellows of the day are such conceited, apish creatures; no man under forty-five is worth wasting a minute's time over.

QUEX. Ho! they say that, your lady-customers?

SOPHY. Yes; and they're good judges, they are.

QUEX. Good judges! none better — none better.

SOPHY [*laying her clipper aside suddenly, and putting her hand to her eyes with a cry of pain*]. Oh!

QUEX [*coolly*]. What's the matter?

SOPHY [*rising*]. A little splinter has flown into my eye. It often happens.

QUEX [*rising*]. Extremely painful, I expect?

SOPHY [*producing her handkerchief*]. Very. [*Giving him her handkerchief*] Do you think you could find it?

QUEX. Certainly, if it's to be found.

SOPHY [*holding the lapels of his coat, her head almost upon his shoulder, her eyes closed*]. Ah! please make haste and look for it!

QUEX. Right or left?

SOPHY. The ri — the left.

QUEX [*sharply*]. Raise your head. Stand up.

SOPHY [*releasing his coat and raising her head*]. Eh?

QUEX [*sternly*]. Open your eyes. Both of them. [*She opens her eyes and stares at him. He returns her handker-*

chief] There! I have removed the splinter. [*She slowly backs away, a whipped child. He follows her*] Fullgurney, I understand you are engaged to be married — to this man, Valma?

SOPHY [*tremblingly*]. Yes, my lord.

QUEX. Do you care for him?

SOPHY [*faintly*]. Yes.

QUEX. In love with him?

SOPHY. Oh, yes, my lord, indeed.

QUEX. And yet you still flirt with him?

SOPHY. Y — es.

QUEX. Take my advice — be satisfied with the kisses your sweet girl gives you. Don't try to get the affections of other men, old or young.

SOPHY. No — no —

QUEX [*sternly, but kindly*]. You are a fool!

[*POLLITT enters, wearing a tall black hat and lemon-colored gloves*]

POLLITT [*jealously*]. Sophy!

[*QUEX walks on*]

SOPHY [*falteringly*]. The gentleman has brought back the bag, Valma de Valma.

POLLITT. I am aware of that. [*He rings his voice*] What are you doing here with Lord Quex?

SOPHY. I — I've been married to him.

[*The YOUNGER SERVANT comes on, carrying the steps*]

SERVANT. [*To SOPHY*] Mrs. Quex is quite ready for you, miss.

[*She hurriedly replaces her work, takes out the cure instruments, etc., and hands the bowl to the YOUNGER SERVANT, and, without looking back, follows him*]
POLLITT or QUEX, goes up the steps and disappears.
The SERVANT follows him, carrying the bowl]

POLLITT. [*To QUEX*] Excuse me, my lord.

QUEX [*coming forward, and picking up his newspaper*]. Eh?

POLLITT. That young lady is engaged to be married.

QUEX. Mr. — Valma?

POLLITT. Yes, my lord. And I very much object to her marrying gentlemen.

QUEX [*dryly*]. Well, there you have a little something to discuss at home before, and, perhaps, after marriage.

POLLITT. I consider the custom of ladies manicuring gentlemen or

occasionally lead to undue familiarity with my lord.

QUX. I am inclined to agree with you.

LITT. And I shall do all I can to dissuade Miss Fullgarney to relinquish her participation in the business.

QUX. The palmistry profession is a dying one at present, eh, Mr. Valma?

LITT [*loftily*]. My engagements are always full. I have disappointed several ladies by coming here this afternoon.

QUX. Poor women! Nevertheless, be careful how you slight the man's trade. Crazes die, you know — grow.

LITT [*tapping his breast*]. I think I shall come to stay, my lord.

QUX [*lightly*]. Well, you're sailing close to the wind, remember, you

LITT. My lord!

QUX [*replacing his newspaper upon the table*]. And if some day you should find yourselves in the police-court, beside a poor old woman whose hand has been crossed with a threepenny-bit in an area —

[*The DUCHESS appears on the further side of the low cypress hedge. She is dressed for dinner. The sky is now faintly rosy, and during the ensuing scene it deepens into a rich sunset*]

QUX. We are going to have a flam-
mable set, Duchess.

DUCHESS. Superb.

LITT [*haughtily*]. I wish you good-
night, my lord.

QUX. Oh, good-evening, Mr. Valma.
[*to himself*] Impudent beggar!

[*POLLITT walks away. After watching his going, the DUCHESS comes eagerly forward*]

DUCHESS [*her hand upon her heart*].
I am here, Harry!

QUX [*in delicate protest*]. Ah, my
Duchess!

DUCHESS. Fortunately I have been
able to dress quickly without exciting
any notice. My maid was summoned
this afternoon, to her father who
[*Sinking on to the bench*] Still,
risks are considerable enough.

QUX. And yet you deliberately
risk them!

DUCHESS. Great passions involve
great dangers. The history of the world
testifies that.

QUX. But why now — now that
circumstances are altered between us?
why, on earth, do you play these
hazardous tricks now?

DUCHESS. I was determined to meet,
to know, the girl with whom you are
about to *ranger* yourself, Harry.

QUX. Even that could have been
arrived at in some safer way.

DUCHESS. Ah, but you fail to see;
it was the daring of this proceeding that
attracted me — the romance of it!

QUX [*raising his hands*]. Romance!
still!

DUCHESS. Always. It is the very
blood in my veins. It keeps me young.
I shall die a romantic girl, however old
I may be.

QUX. You ought, you really ought,
to have flourished in the Middle Ages.

DUCHESS. You have frequently
made that observation. [*Rising*] I do
live in the Middle Ages, in my imagina-
tion. I live in every age in which Love
was not a cool, level emotion, but a
fierce, all-conquering flame — a flame
that grew in the heart of a woman, that
of a sudden spread through her whole
organism, that lit up her eyes with a
light more refulgent than the light of
sun or moon! [*Laying her hand upon
his arm*] Oh, oh, this poor, thin, modern
sentiment miscalled Love —!

QUX [*edging away*]. Sssh! pray be
careful!

DUCHESS. Ah, yes. But, dear
Harry, I cannot endure the ordeal any
longer.

QUX. The ordeal?

DUCHESS. The prolonged discom-
fort, to which I have subjected myself,
of watching your wooing of Miss Eden.
I must go.

QUX [*with ill-concealed relief*]. Go!
leave us?

DUCHESS. I recognize how fitting it
is that you should bring your wild,
irregular career to a close; but after
to-morrow I shall cease to be a spectator
of these preliminaries.

QUX [*his eyes sparkling*]. After to-
morrow!

DUCHESS. Yes, I rejoin poor dear
Strood on Friday. True, he has four
nurses — he always had four nurses,
if you remember?

QUX [*sympathetically*]. Three or
four.

DUCHESS. But then, nurses are but
nurses. [*Nobly*] I must not forget that
I am a wife, Harry.

QUEX. No, no — you mustn't forget that.

DUCHESS [*gazing into his eyes*]. And so, between you and me [*placing her hands upon his shoulders*], it is over.

QUEX [*promptly*]. Over.

DUCHESS. Finally, irrevocably over.

QUEX [*freeing himself*]. Absolutely over. [*Taking her hand and bowing over it solemnly*] Done with.

[*He walks away*]

DUCHESS [*moving slowly*]. That is — almost over.

QUEX [*turning sharply*]. Almost?

DUCHESS. We have yet to say good-by, you know.

QUEX [*returning to her, apprehensively*]. We — we have said good-by.

DUCHESS. Ah, no, no!

QUEX [*again bowing over her hand — with simulated feeling*]. Good-by.

DUCHESS [*looking round*]. What! here?

QUEX [*humouring her*]. This romantic old garden! [*pointing to the statuary*] these silent witnesses — beholders, it is likely, of many similar scenes! the — the — setting sun! Could any situation be more appropriate?

DUCHESS. But we are liable to be interrupted at any moment. The joint romance of our lives, Harry, ought not to end with a curt word and formal hand-shake in an exposed spot of this kind. [*Sitting in the garden-chair*] Oh, it cannot, must not, end so!

QUEX [*eying her uneasily*]. Frankly, I see nothing else for it.

DUCHESS. I can't credit it. Why, what was the second reason for my coming here?

QUEX. Second reason?

DUCHESS. That our parting might be in keeping with our great attachment!

QUEX. Impossible.

DUCHESS. Impracticable?

QUEX. In every way, impossible.

DUCHESS [*taking his hand*]. Oh, don't say that, dear Harry! Ah, the auguries tell me that what I ask will be.

QUEX [*omitting, in his anxiety, to withdraw his hand*]. The auguries?

DUCHESS. Fate — coincidence — call it what you please — foreshadows one more meeting between us.

QUEX. Coincidence?

DUCHESS [*intensely, in a low voice*]. Harry, do you remember a particular evening at Stockholm?

QUEX [*hastily*]. Stockholm?

DUCHESS. That evening upon we discovered how much our meant to each other!

QUEX [*vaguely, while he hastily possession of his hand*]. At Stockholm was it —?

DUCHESS. You were sailing in the Baltic — you must remember. Our yacht had put in at Stockholm. It had come to the Grand Hotel. I had retired, and you and I were sitting out upon the balcony watching the lights of the café on the Norrby. The tiny steamboats that stole across the harbor. Surely you can recollect?

QUEX. Yes, yes, of course.

DUCHESS. Well, do you remember the brand of the champagne you were drinking while you and I sat smoking?

QUEX. Good Lord, no!

DUCHESS. "Félix Poubelle, d'Or." You remarked that it was a brand unknown to you. Have you met it since, Harry?

QUEX. Not that I —

DUCHESS. Nor I till last night. [*Impressively*] It is a very house.

QUEX [*with a slight shrug of shoulders*]. Extremely probable.

DUCHESS. And do you remember how I was clad, that evening at Stockholm?

QUEX. I am afraid I don't.

DUCHESS. *Couleur de rose* gown. I have just such another gown with me.

QUEX. Really?

DUCHESS. Do you remember the month we were at Stockholm?

QUEX. No.

DUCHESS. June — this month of the day of the week?

QUEX. It must be ten years ago.

DUCHESS. Wednesday. There is the record in my diary.

QUEX. Diary! good heaven! you are not so indiscreet —!

DUCHESS. No, no — only the "warm evening." Yes, it was Wednesday. What is to-day?

QUEX. Wednesday.

DUCHESS [*rising*]. Harry, I will see you sipping that brand of champagne once more, while you are facing one another, silently, and smoking Argyropoulos.

QUEX [*negatively*]. Duchess —

DUCHESS. To end as we began, you have not the heart to refuse

. I —

ESS. You do refuse?

. I do.

She passes him, and again sinks upon the bench]

ESS [her back toward him, her s heaving]. Oh! oh!

. I — I am profoundly sorry obliged to speak to you in this

ESS. Oh, then I cannot go on

. Not!

ESS. No! no! no!

. Believe me, it would be for you, for me, for every-

ESS. I cannot! [Producing a lace handkerchief] In the look of the news of your engagement it was a shock — one consoled me; throughout the at has elapsed since then I have in this same thought — there will rt in keeping with our great ent! And now, you would rob of that!

. But — but — but — a deliberate leave-taking! the ay, of all others, to be carefully

ESS. Not by me, Harry — not I wish to carry, in my breast, is house the numb despair of a climax. I cannot drive away from these gates with the simple of a woman who has been pay- ere visit — I cannot!

. My dear Sidonia —!

ESS [decidedly]. I say I cannot!

. [To himself, with a little Oh! Phew!

He walks to and fro impatiently, reflecting. SOPHY, without her hat, comes quickly down the steps as if making for the table. Seeing QUEX and the DUCHESS, she draws back inquisitively]

[by the DUCHESS's side again, y]. Well, I — ha! — I —

ESS [rising eagerly, laying a on his arm]. You will?

SOPHY stoops down behind the dwarf cypress hedge]

. You are certain — certain is would effectually remove the to your rejoining — [with a wave and] on Friday?

ESS. Why, do you think I risk an anticlimax? [In an in- isper] To-night! [Louder] To-

night? [He hesitates a little longer — then bows in assent, stiffly and coldly. She gives an ardent sigh] Ah —! [He retreats a step or two. She draws herself up with dignity] To-night then —

[She turns from him and glides away through the trees. He stands for a moment, a frown upon his face, in thought]

QUEX [suddenly, moving in the direction she has taken] No, no! Duchess —! [A gong sounds in the distance. He pauses, looking at his watch, angrily] Ptshah! [He turns up the stage and discovers SOPHY, who is now standing behind the hedge] Hallo! [SOPHY advances, laughing rather foolishly] What are you doing here?

SOPHY. Looking for my rings. I took them off before I began manicuring you.

QUEX [pointing to the hedge]. You didn't drop them there, did you?

SOPHY. No, I left them on the table.

QUEX [looking toward the table]. There's the table.

SOPHY [coming to the table and putting on her rings]. Yes, I know.

QUEX [after a short pause]. How long have you been here?

SOPHY. I? Oh, I'd just come as you spoke to me.

QUEX [half-satisfied]. Oh —?

[He goes up the steps, gives her a parting look, and disappears. It is now twilight. MRS. EDEN, FRAYNE, and MURIEL — all dressed for dinner — appear on the side of the low hedge]

MRS. EDEN. [To FRAYNE, walking with him above the hedge] Delightful, isn't it? It was planted by the late Lord Owbridge's father a hundred years ago.

FRAYNE [seeing SOPHY]. Why, isn't that the young manicure lady?

MRS. EDEN. Yes. All these pieces of sculpture are genuine old Italian. This quaint little fountain came from the Villa Marchotti —

FRAYNE [edging toward SOPHY]. Alluring.

MRS. EDEN. This is the fountain.

FRAYNE [returning to her]. Quaint old fountain.

SOPHY. [To MURIEL, across the hedge in a whisper] Darling!

MRS. EDEN [looking into the distance]. I think I see the dear Duchess.

FRAYNE [alertly]. Where?

MRS. EDEN. There.

FRAYNE. I have the honour of knowing her Grace slightly.

MRS. EDEN [*moving away*]. What a sweet woman!

FRAYNE [*following her*]. Alluring!

[*They disappear through the trees as MURIEL, coming from below the hedge, joins SOPHY*]

SOPHY. Darling!

MURIEL. What is it, Sophy?

SOPHY. Lord Quex and this — this Duchess — they know each other very well, of course?

MURIEL. They are old acquaintances, I understand.

SOPHY. Ah!

MURIEL. Why do you ask?

SOPHY. I've just seen them together, talking.

MURIEL. Talking? why not?

SOPHY. Yes, but how?

MURIEL. How?

SOPHY. I'll tell you. After you went indoors to dress, I took off my rings and put them on that table. [*Looking away rather guiltily*] Rings fidget me, this hot weather — don't they you? Well, just as I'd finished with Mrs. Jack, it suddenly struck me — my rings! — and I hurried back to fetch them. When I got here, I came across Lord Quex and the Duchess.

MURIEL [*calmly*]. Yes?

SOPHY. I stooped down behind that hedge there.

MURIEL. You did not!

SOPHY. Oh, I suppose you consider it mean!

MURIEL. Despicable!

SOPHY. Despicable, is it! I don't care! My goodness, I'd do the shabbiest thing a woman could do to save you from him!

MURIEL [*peering among the trees*]. Hush, hush, hush!

SOPHY [*on the verge of tears*]. Perhaps you fancy I'm mean from choice? Perhaps you imagine —?

MURIEL. Be quiet, Sophy!

SOPHY [*giving a sniff and lowering her voice*]. Well, here they were, standing exactly where you are, close to each other. [*MURIEL changes her position*] I saw her touch his arm. Oh, I'm positive there's something between those two! "You will?" I heard her say. And then he made a remark about Friday — Friday —

MURIEL. The Duchess goes on Friday.

SOPHY. That was it, of And then she mumbled some couldn't catch; and then — this! — then she said "to-night plainly. *To-night!* and in such of voice! And then he bowed out she came with "to-night — "to-night," for the second and away she went. Now, what think that "to-night" of hers m

MURIEL [*coldly, seating herself on the bench*]. Nothing — anything

SOPHY. Nothing!

MURIEL. A hundred topics of conversation would lead to such impression. [*Looking at SOPHY*] You are mistaken in the conclusion you put upon it.

SOPHY [*quietly*]. Mistaken, a

MURIEL [*with clenched hands*]. The Duchess of Strood is a most intelligent late woman. [*Suddenly*] Oh, it will be too infamous!

[*The DUCHESS and FRAYNE, following*]

MRS. EDEN, reappear below the hedge. SOPHY retreats to the back of the bench upon which she is sitting. The DUCHESS and FRAYNE approach, talking. MRS. EDEN chats to SOPHY as she goes to the hedge]

FRAYNE. [*To the DUCHESS*] I am flattered by your presence of me, Duchess. When I met I had hardly a gray hair on my head. [*Running his hand through his hair*] Ha! The West Coast —

DUCHESS. Is the climate so good?

FRAYNE. Deadly. But the climate of it is [*with a bow and a sigh*] no European ladies.

[*MURIEL — eying the FRAYNE — rises, shrinkingly, and goes away*]

FRAYNE [*looking after MURIEL*]. Quex! ha, there's a lucky dog!

DUCHESS [*sweetly*]. You are lighted, naturally, at your old approaching marriage?

FRAYNE [*kissing his finger-tip on the left*]. Miss Eden —! [*Inquiringly*] And — and you, Duchess?

DUCHESS [*raising her eyebrow*].

FRAYNE. You also approach marriage?

DUCHESS [*blandly*]. Approaching marriage is scarcely sufficiently intimate with a party to express approval or disapproval.

FRAYNE [*eying her askance*].

ght you had known Quex for —
ome years.

HESS. Quite superficially. I
describe him rather as a great
of his Grace.

OWBRIDGE *appears on the top of
the steps*

Y OWBRIDGE. Are you here,
ss?

HESS *[turning to her]*. Yes.

Y OWBRIDGE *[coming down the
steps]*. Oh, I am really very upset!

HESS. Upset?

Y OWBRIDGE. About your maid.
circumstance has only just been
ed to me — you have lost your
[Seeing FRAYNE] Is that Sir
ester? *[FRAYNE advances and
takes her hands]* I didn't observe you,
dusk. Have you seen Henry?
der if he is waiting for us in the
g-room?

YNE. May I go and hunt for

Y OWBRIDGE. It would be kind

*[FRAYNE goes up the steps and
away. MRS. EDEN comes to
the stone bench. MURIEL re-
turns slowly, coming from
among the trees and appearing
on the further side of the low
hedge]*

HESS. *[To LADY OWBRIDGE]*
don't be in the least concerned for
ear Lady Owbridge; the absence
maid is quite a temporary matter.
Watson's father is unwell and I
d her off to him this afternoon.
ill be back by mid-day to-morrow,
omises me.

Y OWBRIDGE. But, dear me! in
neantime my own woman shall
pon you.

HESS. I couldn't dream of it.

S. EDEN. Why not my Gilchrist
let us share her?

HESS. No, no; the housemaid
ssisted me into this gown —

Y OWBRIDGE. Chalmers? well,
s Chalmers, certainly. But I
hat Chalmers has hot hands. Or
am — no, Denham is suffering
a bad knee. Of course, there's
! Bruce is painfully near-sighted
t would Bruce do? Or little
s —?

HY *[stepping from behind the bench,
confronting LADY OWBRIDGE — in a
voice]*. Or I, my lady?

LADY OWBRIDGE. You, my dear?

SOPHY. Why shouldn't I attend
upon her Grace to-night and in the
morning? *[With half a courtesy to the
DUCHESS]* I should dearly like to have
the honour.

*[MURIEL comes forward, staring
at SOPHY]*

MRS. EDEN. Now, that's very proper
and good-natured of you, Sophy.

LADY OWBRIDGE. But, Miss Full-
garney —

SOPHY *[modestly]*. Oh, I never feel
like Miss Fullgarney out of my business,
my lady. You see, I was maid for
years, and it's second nature to me. Do
let me, my lady — do, your Grace!

MRS. EDEN. Duchess —?

DUCHESS *[hesitatingly]*. Oh — oh, by
all means. *[To SOPHY]* Thank you.

*[The gong sounds in the distance
again, as QUEX — now in even-
ing-dress — and FRAYNE return
together, above the hedge]*

LADY OWBRIDGE. Here is Quex.

*[The ladies, except MURIEL, join
FRAYNE and QUEX]*

MURIEL. *[To SOPHY]* What are you
doing?

SOPHY *[breathlessly]*. The house-
keeper showed me over the house. I
remember — her maid's room is at the
end of a passage leading from the
boudoir!

MURIEL. Sophy, you must not!
you sha'n't!

SOPHY. Why, isn't it for the best?
If I was mistaken over what I heard
just now, I sha'n't see or hear anything
wicked to-night; and that will satisfy
both of us —!

LADY OWBRIDGE *[calling]*. Muriel —

*[MURIEL joins the group; SOPHY
slips away and disappears]*

LADY OWBRIDGE. *[To the DUCHESS]*
Shall we go in?

*[LADY OWBRIDGE and the DUCH-
ESS, and MRS. EDEN and
MURIEL, ascend the steps and
go toward the house. Instead
of following the ladies, QUEX
turns sharply and comes for-
ward with an angry, sullen look
upon his face]*

FRAYNE *[looking round for QUEX]*.
Hallo, Harry! *[Coming to QUEX]* Aren't
you —?

QUEX. Hang dinner! I don't want
to eat.

FRAYNE. Anything wrong, old man?
anything I —?

QUEX [*shaking himself up*]. No, no; nothing — the hot weather. Come along; we mustn't be late for grace. [*Boisterously*] At any rate, a glass of champagne — [*slapping FRAYNE on the back*] a glass or two of Félix Poubelle, hey? Félix Poubelle, Carte d'Or! ha, ha, ha!

[*As they turn to go, they see SOPHY on the other side of the low hedge, looking at them steadily*]

QUEX. [*To FRAYNE, quietly*] Wait! [*They stand still, while SOPHY very demurely walks to the steps, ascends them, and disappears*]

QUEX [*in an altered tone*]. Chick — you see that hussy?

FRAYNE. Miss Fullgarney?

QUEX. I can't make her out. I believe she wants to play some trick on me.

FRAYNE. Trick?

QUEX. 'Pon my soul, I believe she's prying — spying on me.

FRAYNE. That nice gal!

QUEX. Oh, I daresay I'm wrong. But if I found it so, I — I'd wring her neck.

FRAYNE [*wistfully*]. It's an alluring neck.

QUEX. Possibly. But I'd wring it —!

[*They go up the steps together*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT III

The scene represents two rooms — a bedroom and a boudoir — separated by an arched opening across which a portière is hung. The portière is, however, drawn aside, and the bedroom, in which is a bed with an elaborate canopy, is partly revealed. The boudoir is nearest to the spectator. Above the fireplace, with bare hearth, on the right, is a broad window running obliquely toward the centre, concealed by heavy curtains. On the left of the window, facing the audience, is a door admitting to a long, narrow passage in which a hanging lamp is burning; and on the left of this door is the arched opening dividing the bedroom from the boudoir. Another door opens into the boudoir on the

opposite side from a corridor landing. Beyond this door, the wall, is a cabinet, on which is a clock. A chair at each end of this cabinet. To the left of the arched opening — obliquely, the mirror turned toward the audience — is a cheval-glass on the right is a sculptured ornamental pillar supporting a lighted lamp. Before the lamp stands a large dressing-table. On the table are a pair of candlesticks with lighted candles, a looking-glass, toilet-bottles, and a handkerchief. A chair faces the dressing-table. Nearer to the spectator are another table, with a heap of French newspapers on it, and an arm-chair. In the room stand a circular table, an armchair, and a settee. A silver box containing cigarettes, an ash-tray, a cigarette stand, and a lighted spirit-lamp stand on this table.

The rooms are richly furnished and decorated, but in an old-fashioned, formal manner. Everything is worn, faded and faded in tone. There are no pillows upon the chairs, nor on the settee, nor any other signs of softness and comfort. Keys are in the hands of both the doors.

[*The DUCHESS and MRS. EDEN enter. The DUCHESS is seated — the DUCHESS in the armchair, MRS. EDEN upon the settee, smoking cigarettes. MRS. EDEN is wearing a smart dressing-jacket. The DUCHESS is still fully dressed. SOPHY, who has assumed an air of respectability, is engaged in bringing hairbrushes and some toilet-bottles from the bedroom and in arranging them on the dressing-table. Her eyes are fixed constantly upon the DUCHESS*]

MRS. EDEN. These are pleasant cigarettes. I didn't know you —

DUCHESS [*plaintively*]. My nerves — for my nerves.

MRS. EDEN [*blowing rings*]. Smoking. Such a bore, because they are rather dropping it. [*Extinguishes her cigarette*] What are these?

DUCHESS. I forget.

MRS. EDEN. I see — Argyre.

[*There is a knock at the door. SOPHY goes to the door and opens it slightly; a note is handed her*]

EDEN [looking at the note]. Oh, — [Closing the door] I beg your pardon, your Grace — it's for me.

[She returns to the dressing-table, reading the note]

MRS. EDEN [jestingly]. Ah, Sophy! must encourage no more sweet-temper now, remember.

MRS. EDEN. This is from him, Mrs. — from Mr. Valma, saying good-night. He's gone to bed.

MRS. EDEN. Good gracious! how can you know?

MRS. EDEN. Mrs. Gregory, the housekeeper, has allowed him to sleep here to-night, so that we may go back to bed in the morning.

MRS. EDEN. Ah, yes.

MRS. EDEN [taking off her bracelets]. Jewel-case, Sophy.

[SOPHY puts the note to her lips, slips it into the bodice of her dress, and re-enters the bedroom]

MRS. EDEN. [To the DUCHESS] By-the-way, what did Valma see in your face to-night, after dinner? Why don't you tell us?

MRS. EDEN. I was too vexed at the time. [With downcast eyes] He proposed to discover that a number of men were in love with me.

MRS. EDEN. Yes, but what made you so angry?

MRS. EDEN. Why, that.

MRS. EDEN. That!

MRS. EDEN. They were shocking words to hear, even when spoken by a mere gossip-teller. And you — why did you confide to us the result of Mr. Valma's reading of your palm?

[SOPHY comes from the bedroom, carrying a jewel-case, which she deposits upon the dressing-table]

MRS. EDEN. I was in a rage too. There's only one man in love with me — and he appears.

MRS. EDEN [with a shudder]. One is so dreadfully dreadful.

MRS. EDEN. Horrid! [Making a shudder] It's Jack — my husband!

MRS. EDEN [reprovingly]. Hush, dear Mrs. Eden! Sophy — [SOPHY comes]

MRS. EDEN. Languidly] I shall wait half an hour before attempting to go to bed. Put me into something loose.

MRS. EDEN. Yes, your Grace.

[SOPHY again retires to the bedroom]

MRS. EDEN [rising]. May I look at your literature?

[MRS. EDEN goes to the writing-table and turns over the books she finds there. The DUCHESS glances at the clock, and eyes MRS. EDEN with impatience]

MRS. EDEN. "Le Calvaire d'une vierge." "Lune de Mi-juin." "Les Aventures de Madame Plon." Oh, I've heard of this! this is a little — h'm! — isn't it?

DUCHESS. I read those things for the sake of their exquisitely polished style; the subjects escape me.

MRS. EDEN [seating herself by the writing-table and dipping into "Madame Plon"] Ah, yes, the style — the style. [Absorbed] We haven't much real literary style in England, have we?

[SOPHY returns, carrying a pink tea-gown trimmed with green ribbons, and a richly embroidered Mandarin's robe]

SOPHY. Will your Grace put on one of these? [With a curl of the lip] They're both very becoming, I should think.

DUCHESS [smiling sadly]. Becoming! as if that mattered, child!

SOPHY. Which will your Grace —?

DUCHESS. [To herself, closing her eyes] Couleur de rose — [To SOPHY] er — that pink rag. Take off my collar-ette.

[SOPHY lays the tea-gown and the robe over the back of the settee and proceeds to unfasten the DUCHESS's pearl collar-ette]

MRS. EDEN [startled by some passage in the book she is reading]. Oh, I say!

DUCHESS. What, dear Mrs. Eden?

MRS. EDEN [bethinking herself — soberly]. Ah, yes, the style is excellent, isn't it?

DUCHESS. [To SOPHY, while the collar-ette is in process of removal] Have you everything you require for the night, child?

SOPHY. Yes, thank you, your Grace. Miss Gilchrist, Mrs. Eden's maid, has lent me a night-gown and a pair of slippers.

DUCHESS [handing her bracelets to SOPHY]. Drop them into the case.

[SOPHY puts the collar-ette and bracelets in the jewel-case. The DUCHESS, rising, again looks at the clock and at Mrs. EDEN. SOPHY returns to the DUCHESS, who is now behind the settee]

DUCHESS. [To SOPHY] It is very good of you, Sophy, to attend upon me. SOPHY [averting her head]. Not at all, your Grace.

DUCHESS [taking up the Mandarin's robe]. Here is a pretty thing for you. [Giving the robe to SOPHY] Wear it to dress your hair in, in the morning.

SOPHY [breathing shortly]. Oh, no, your Grace — please ——!

DUCHESS. Nonsense, child; take it.

[SOPHY, somewhat out of countenance, lays the robe over the back of the chair]

MRS. EDEN [looking up]. Well, you are a lucky girl, Sophy!

SOPHY. Yes, I know it's very beautiful; [returning to the DUCHESS] but I — I think I'd rather not ——

DUCHESS. Tsch, tsch! help me. [The DUCHESS is standing before the cheval-glass, which conceals her from the audience. With SOPHY's aid, she slips out of her dress and puts herself into the tea-gown, while she talks to MRS. EDEN] Miss Eden is not well to-night, I am afraid. She didn't come into the drawing-room.

[MRS. EDEN rises and goes to the settee, upon which she partly kneels while she chatters to the DUCHESS]

MRS. EDEN. She complained of headache and bolted upstairs. Muriel is such an odd girl at times.

DUCHESS. A sweet one.

MRS. EDEN. Perfectly adorable. Only I wish she wasn't so moody and uncertain.

DUCHESS. But a headache — [sympathetically] dear child!

MRS. EDEN. An engaged girl ought not to have a headache — no girl ought. It's just one of those things that make a man ponder.

DUCHESS. Ponder.

MRS. EDEN. Reflect. A man loves to think a girl is like an angel — beautiful pink and white right through, with no clock-work. The moment she complains of headache, or toothache, or a chilblain on the heel, the angel game is off, and she's got to try and hold her own as a simple mortal. And as a mortal she's not in it with a man. No, it's angel or nothing with us women. I remember my Mater saying to me when I was engaged to Jack, "Sybil, now mind! enjoy the very best of health till you have been married at least ten years; and then be sure you have an excellent

motive for cracking-up." [The tinkles out the half-hour. She at the clock]. Half-past eleven dead of night for this house! I'll be off to my cot.

[SOPHY carries the DUCHESS'S dress into the bedroom]

DUCHESS [coming to MRS. EDEN]. Must you? Good-night.

MRS. EDEN. So nice of you to me this gossip.

DUCHESS. Delighted.

[They kiss affectionately]

MRS. EDEN. We go shopping to-morrow, do we not?

DUCHESS. Yes, yes.

MRS. EDEN [with exaggerated emphasis]. To-morrow! your last day of misery! [At the door, finding she has "Madame Plon" in her hand] do you happen to be on this one?

DUCHESS. Not that one.

MRS. EDEN. I wonder whether you'll lend it to me?

DUCHESS. Gladly.

MRS. EDEN. As you say it is something about these writers ——

DUCHESS. Style.

MRS. EDEN. That's it. [Opening the door] Ah! lights out!

DUCHESS. Can you see?

MRS. EDEN [going out]. There's a glimmer —— [She disappears]

DUCHESS. I'll keep the door till you have turned the corner.

[SOPHY comes back and watches the DUCHESS]

DUCHESS remains at the door for a little while, then she takes her hand to MRS. EDEN and closes the door]

SOPHY. Shall I brush your hair now?

DUCHESS [going to the writing-table, taking up a book]. No. I will not. The exertion of brushing my hair often find, encourages sleep. I'll go myself to bed. Run away. Do not let me see or hear anything of you to-morrow morning. Eight o'clock. [She sits upon the settee and opens her eyes] SOPHY, eyeing her keenly, is about to withdraw] Oh —— Sophy! [SOPHY turns] Do you — believe in Mesmerism?

SOPHY. Believe in him, your Grace.

DUCHESS. Believe that what a woman's hand he has read the power of divination — the power he professes?

Y. Oh, yes.

DUCHESS [looking away]. Then if he saw a woman that a great many men were in love with her, you —

Y. I'm sure he knows what he's about.

DUCHESS [with a little purr of contentment]. Ah! [Assuming indifference] I recently of an instance of his conjectured such a state of mind from the lines of a woman's face. [Severely] I could only hope your surmise was an incorrect one.

Y [her eyes flashing scornfully]. Yes, your Grace, if a woman is found and Valma finds Venus's girdle marked in her palm; and if he sees from other signs that she's in a bad light and loose; it isn't much worse than those that there are a few horrid fellows kissing their lips at the thought of

DUCHESS [shocked]. My good girl! Various expressions you make use of [resuming her reading] That's all. SOPHY goes to the door and opens it]

Y. I wish your Grace good-

DUCHESS [raising her head for a moment]. Good-night. You are not taking your robe.

SOPHY looks at the robe and hesitates; in the end she gathers it up uneasily]

Y. I — I am very much obliged to your Grace —

DUCHESS. Yes, you have thanked me enough. Turn out the lamp in that room.

Y. Certainly, your Grace.

[SOPHY disappears, shutting the door after her. The DUCHESS remains quite still for a moment, then rises promptly, replaces her book, and — seating herself at the dressing-table — puts her hair in order. This done, she takes up the hand-mirror and smiles, frowns, and looks caressingly at herself. Then she lays the hand-mirror aside, blows out the candles upon the dressing-table, and poses before the cheval-glass. Ultimately, completely assured as to her appearance, she cautiously opens the door at which SOPHY has departed, and, going a few steps along the passage,

listens with strained ears. The passage is now in darkness. Apparently satisfied, the DUCHESS returns, and, closing the door gently, turns the key in the lock. Her next proceeding is to attempt to tear one of the ribbons from her tea-gown. Failing in this, she detaches it with the aid of a pair of scissors, and, opening the door leading from the corridor, ties the ribbon to the outer door-handle. Whereupon she closes the door and walks about the room contentedly. Suddenly she pauses, and, going to the cabinet, produces a small tray on which are a bottle of champagne and a champagne glass. Placing the tray on the circular table, she regards the single glass thoughtfully. Then, as if struck by an idea, she disappears into the bedroom. After a brief interval, the door opens softly and QUEX enters, carrying a lighted wax match. Being in, he shuts the door silently and looks about the room. Hearing the DUCHESS in the adjoining apartment, he frowns and blows out the match. Coming to the circular table, he contemplates the preparation for his reception with distaste; then, flinging the match into the ash-tray, he sits, with a set, determined look upon his face. After another short pause, the DUCHESS returns, polishing a tumbler with a cambric handkerchief. QUEX rises]

DUCHESS [under her breath]. Ah! [He bows stiffly. She places the tumbler on the tray, tosses the handkerchief aside, and — first motioning him to stand away from the line of the door — opens the door, removes the ribbon from the handle, closes and locks it. Then she turns to him with a long-drawn sigh] Ah—h—h!

QUEX [coming down gloomily]. Is it all right?

DUCHESS. Quite. [Advancing to him with outstretched hands] Welcome, Harry! oh, welcome!

QUEX [retreating a few steps — firmly]. One moment. I have something to ask of you, Sidonia. [Looking round] You are sure —?

DUCHESS. Yes, yes. Only don't raise your voice; [glancing towards the

door] my maid sleeps in a room at the end of that passage. [*Gracefully seating herself upon the settee and motioning him to sit beside her*] Sit down. Oh, the woe of this final meeting! the pathos of it!

QUEX [*bitterly, withdrawing the chair a little further from the table*]. Yes, I agree with you — there is an element of wofulness in this meeting; it is not altogether without pathos.

DUCHESS. Not altogether!

QUEX [*sitting, facing her*]. But, for yourself, my dear Sidonia — well, I have the consolation of believing that directly you turn your back upon Fauncey Court much of the wofulness of your position will evaporate.

DUCHESS. Harry!

QUEX. Forgive me — you admit that you delight in colouring even the most ordinary events of life rather highly. If I may put it more roughly, you are disposed, my dear Sidonia — at times, perhaps, a little inopportunately — to burn a good deal of red fire. [*Leaning forward*] At any rate, I beg an especial favour of you to-night.

DUCHESS. What —?

QUEX [*distinctly*]. No red fire.

DUCHESS [*chilled*]. Is this the something you had to ask of me? [*He bows in assent*] I cannot remember ever having seen you in this mood.

QUEX. This is our first actual tête-à-tête since my engagement to Miss Eden.

DUCHESS. Oh, I understand.

QUEX. And now shall I tell you where the wofulness and the pathos most conspicuously display themselves on this occasion?

DUCHESS. If you wish to.

QUEX. In the confounded treachery of my being here at all.

DUCHESS. Treachery?

QUEX. You know I am under a bond of good behaviour to my old aunt and to the Edens.

DUCHESS [*with a slight shrug of the shoulders*]. Really?

QUEX. Yes. [*Clenching his teeth*] And this is how I observe it. After all my resolutions, this — this is how I observe it.

[*He rises and paces up and down the room*]

DUCHESS [*fretfully*]. I am bound to remark that your present behaviour appears quite unimpeachable.

QUEX. Unimpeachable! here — alone — in your company!

DUCHESS [*covering her eyes with her hand*]. Oh, cruel, cruel!

QUEX [*pausing*]. Cruel —?

DUCHESS [*with heaving bosom*]. There! if you deny me the possession of real feeling, why should you hesitate to rain blows on me?

QUEX [*softening, coming to her*]. dear Sidonia, I don't — I don't — to —

DUCHESS [*rising, and grasping his hands*]. Oh, Harry!

QUEX. Tsch! please! [*He turns himself and she sinks back upon the settee, her eyes closed. He regards her uncomfortably for a moment; then, with some hesitation, he produces from his coat-tail pocket a small box covered with a pretty brocade, with which he handles her easily*] You expressed a wish to see me here on Friday with a sensation of despair at your heart, Sidonia. My feeling about our parting is really one, heaven knows I have no doubt, make it more acute —

DUCHESS [*partly opening her eyes*]. What is in that box, Harry?

QUEX. That is just what I want to — to — [*Lifting the lid and clearing the box*] These are the little souvenirs which have passed from you to me at odd times.

DUCHESS [*with reviving interest*]. Yes.

QUEX. I have had no other opportunity — [*Looking about him and then for a place to deposit the box*] you —? shall I —? what the devil become of 'em?

DUCHESS [*sitting upright and placing her hand over her back hair*]. If there were a fire, we could crouch over it and watch the flames consume them one by one.

QUEX. But there isn't a fire.

DUCHESS [*rising, and taking the box from him*]. Let us examine them.

QUEX. No, no, no.

DUCHESS. Yes, yes. [*Opening the box and gazing into it*] Ah, poor objects! dead, yet animate; silent, oh, how eloquent! Don't go away!

[*She overturns the contents of the box on to the table. The objects fall opposite each other, and lie down upon the litter*]

DUCHESS [*she picks up a ring — [thoughtfully] turquoise and [Recollecting] Stockholm! You remember — that night you and I sat in the lights of the café on the boulevard*]. bro —!

X [hastily]. Yes, yes; you've had it already to-day.

DUCHESS [picking up a scarf-pin]. A fine Copenhagen! Ah, that state-room of mine on the Irene!

X. Yes, yes, charming.

DUCHESS [taking up a locket]. A — my name in brilliants. Genoa!

X [nodding]. H'm, um.

DUCHESS [taking up a white shoe]. Oh. Where —?

X [shaking his head]. I don't —

DUCHESS. Mentone!

X. Of course — Mentone.

DUCHESS [discovering some object in box]. What is this? [Producing a

box of pale-blue silk, with a diamond clasp. A — a — where —? ah, yes. Looking at the things in the box] Oh, how little objects! dead, yet animated, yet, oh, how eloquent!

[She passes him and slips the box into the drawer of the writing-table. The clock strikes a quarter to twelve]

X [glancing at the clock]. By Jove, it's late! I — I'll leave you now,

DUCHESS [turning]. No, no — not so late. [Coming to the table and picking up the box of cigarettes] Why, you — [offering him the box] Argyropoulos!

X [accepting a cigarette reluctantly]. Yes.

DUCHESS [Again looking at the clock]. Three minutes.

DUCHESS [taking a cigarette, replacing it, and holding the spirit lamp while she looks at his cigarette from it] You were always so impatient. [In lighting her cigarette, the flame of the lamp is extinguished] Ah! [After replacing the lamp, she lights her cigarette from his, and looks into his eyes] Argyropoulos. Dolly! Once more — Argyropoulos.

X. Yes, yes — capital tobacco.

[He gets away from her] DUCHESS. And look! you see, Dolly?

X [turning]. Eh?

DUCHESS [pointing to the bottle of champagne]. "Félix Poubelle, Carte Blanche!" [Taking up the scissors which were left upon the table] The wire is now severed.

[She commences to cut the string. He comes to her]

X [taking the scissors from her]. Permit me.

[Always intent upon avoiding her,

he moves away, the bottle in his hand, cutting the string]

DUCHESS [following him]. Is it likely to make a loud report?

QUEX. Hardly.

DUCHESS [frowning censoriously]. One doesn't want a sound of that sort to ring through the corridors. [Looking about her impatiently] These formal, frigid rooms!

[She runs lightly into the bedroom, snatches a pillow from the bed, and returns to him]

QUEX [his hand upon the cork]. What is that for?

DUCHESS [enveloping his hand and the bottle in the pillow — calmly]. It is wiser to muffle it.

[He pauses, looking at her fixedly]

QUEX [in a low, grave voice]. Dolly —

DUCHESS. Dolly! [Closing her eyes] You give me my pet name again!

QUEX. Ah, Dolly, if only there wasn't quite so much in one's life — to muffle! [He pulls the cork. She tosses the pillow on to the settee, a little irritably] May I —?

[She inclines her head. He pours wine into the glasses; she takes the champagne glass, he the tumbler]

DUCHESS [sentimentally]. Félix Poubelle, Carte d'Or! [Looking at him over the brim of her glass] Eh bien! au joyeux passé!

QUEX. Non, non — à un avenir meilleur!

DUCHESS. Que vous êtes prosaïque, soit!

[They drink]

[She sits with a sigh of dissatisfaction] Ah!

QUEX [leaning against the table, drinking his wine]. Wonderful wine — really exceptional. [Struck by a thought, turning to her] Forgive me — you must have found some difficulty in introducing Monsieur Félix Poubelle into this hallowed apartment.

DUCHESS. No. [Sipping her wine] My maid thinks it is by my doctor's orders.

QUEX. Your maid, yes — [sipping his wine; then sitting upon the settee, glass in hand] — but my poor aunt must be highly scandalized.

DUCHESS [her glass at her lips]. Dear Lady Owbridge will not know. I told the girl to coax it out of the butler, as if it were for herself. These women have a way of doing such things.

QUEX [*laughing rather sadly*]. Ha, ha, ha! who is beyond temptation? Not even old Bristow — sixty if he's a day.

DUCHESS [*shrugging her shoulders*]. Sixty or sixseon — when a girl is fascinating

QUEX. Fascinating! your woman, Watson!

DUCHESS. No, no Watson has left me for a few hours. I am speaking of Sophy.

[*There is a brief silence. QUEX, surprised in the act of drinking, lowers his glass slowly*]

QUEX [*in a queer voice*]. Sophy?

DUCHESS. Miss Fullgarnay, the musicianist. She was so good as to offer to take Watson's place for to-night.

QUEX [*looking steadily before him*]. Oh?

[*There is another pause. The DUCHESS puts down her glass and, with her foot, pushes the footstool toward QUEX*]

DUCHESS [*sliding from her chair on to the footstool*]. Oh, Harry, the bitterness of this final meeting! the dull agony of it!

[*He gets rid of his tumbler and touches her arm*]

QUEX [*quietly*]. Duchess

DUCHESS [*surprised*]. Eh?

QUEX. I am sorry to alarm you, but this girl — Miss Eden's foster-sister —

DUCHESS. What about her?

QUEX. She's a out.

DUCHESS. Out!

QUEX [*gathering his ideas as he proceeds*]. A common hussy, not above playing tricks — spying

DUCHESS. Spying!

QUEX. I caught her behind the hedge this evening, in the Italian garden, after you and I had been talking together.

DUCHESS. Behind the hedge!

QUEX. She had previously done her best to make an ass of me, while you were dressing for dinner ——! [*Looking toward the passage-door*] Where do you say her room is?

DUCHESS. At the end of that passage. [*They rise together, with very little movement*] Oh, but she is in bed, and asleep!

QUEX. Is she?

DUCHESS. Harry!

QUEX. Wait ——! [*He goes to the door, and examines the key-hole. Then*

he turns to the DUCHESS and beckons her. She joins him. He says in a whisper, pointing to the key-hole] you notice ——?

DUCHESS. What?

QUEX. The key is in the horizontally.

DUCHESS. She may have been looking at us? [*He nods. She is the thought*] How inexcusably of me!

QUEX [*at her elbow*]. Listen! keep out of sight. Open the door boldly and walk along the passage. See if there is any sign of movement.

DUCHESS. Yes, yes. [*Steady self*] Perhaps we are disturbing ourselves unnecessarily.

QUEX [*nodding reassuringly*]. Yes, so.

[*He draws back into the bedroom, but so that he can put his head out at the opening, and watch the DUCHESS's proceedings. She goes to the door and looks under her hand upon the key*]

DUCHESS [*faltering*]. Oh! oh! heavens!

QUEX [*encouragingly*]. It's all right. It's all right. Very likely I am mistaken. Now!

[*The DUCHESS opens the door suddenly, and SOPHY, who is waiting at the key-hole, turns toward her*]

DUCHESS. Ah!

[*SOPHY, enveloped in the dark, in her robe, gathers her skirts, without a word, slides along the passage. The DUCHESS shuts the door and runs unnoted to the settee, where she comes down, her mouth open*]

QUEX. I was sure of it.

DUCHESS [*aghast*]. What will she tell? What will she tell?

QUEX. Yes — she'll tell.

DUCHESS. Why do you speak positively?

QUEX. She is in Miss Eden's confidence — the trull. And she has always shown her teeth at me, remember. [*Drawing a deep sigh*] Oh, yes, I see — Miss Fullgarnay's innocent mischief throughout.

DUCHESS [*sinking upon the settee*]. Oh!

QUEX [*quietly*]. Well — I'm done.

DUCHESS. Oh, my reputation!

QUEX. I'm — done.

DUCHESS. My reputation!

ceased to guard that, as you

I've lost her.

ESS. My reputation!

Of course, I deserve it.

[He sits, his head bowed]

ESS [looking up]. To think —

that I allowed this plausible

to thrust herself upon me!

his head, glaring fiercely. She

pillow] Oh! oh! my reputa-

the hands of this low creature!

Ah —! [With a half-

dry cry he goes to the door and pulls

The DUCHESS runs after him

his arm] I said I'd wring her

neck — I told Frayne so.

ESS [pushing him away from the

Don't! don't! violence will not

[She closes the door; he stands

the chair by the writing-table.

ck strikes twelve] Midnight.

upon a chair] At any rate, you

er go now.

[turning to her]. I beg your

I regret having lost control of

ESS [miserably]. It has been a

ly disappointing meeting.

[heavily]. Let us see each

the morning. [She nods] Be

in the grounds by nine.

ESS. Yes. [Rallying] After all,

ere may be nothing behind this

behaviour. It may have been

vulgarest curiosity on her part.

[incredulously]. Ha! However,

case —

ESS. Money.

Money.

ESS. I ought to sound her

she presents herself at my

ought I not?

Earlier — before she has had

get about the house. Stand at

If she's to be bought, she

ave whatever she demands —

!

ESS. How liberal of you!

QUEX walks toward the door, then

turns to her]

. One thing I hope I need

ay, Duchess?

ESS. What —?

[with dignity]. Worst come to

st, I shall defend you by every

n my power. I'm done, I feel

wring himself up]; but, of course,

ie for you like the devil.

ESS [plaintively]. Thanks. And

dragged you into it all.

QUEX. Tsch! [Bowing stiffly] Good-night.

DUCHESS. Good-night. [She goes to the table and prepares to remove the tray. Having turned the key of the door, QUEX pauses. She says fretfully] Oh, why don't you go, Harry?

QUEX [facing her sharply, a new light in his eye]. No! you go.

DUCHESS [in astonishment]. I!

QUEX [returning to her excitedly]. I tell you I can't wait through a night of suspense: Quick! [Pacing the room] Leave me to deal with her here, at once.

DUCHESS. You!

QUEX [snapping his fingers]. By Jove, yes!

DUCHESS. What are you going to do?

QUEX. Give her a fair chance, and then — spoil her tale against you, in any event.

DUCHESS. How?

QUEX. Trust to me. [Impatiently] Go, Duchess.

DUCHESS. But where? where can I —?

QUEX. Run away to Mrs. Jack — ask her to let you share her room to-night. [Pointing to the writing-table] Ah —! scribble a message —

[The DUCHESS seats herself at the writing-table and writes agitatedly at his dictation]

QUEX [dictating]. "The Duchess of Strood has been seized with a dreadful fit of nerves and has gone to Mrs. Eden's room. Come to her there at eight." Lay that upon the bed. [Indicating the bedroom] Is there a door in there?

DUCHESS [rising breathlessly]. Yes.

QUEX. Locked?

DUCHESS. Yes.

QUEX. The key. [Imperatively] Give me the key. [She runs into the bedroom and, having laid the written message upon the bed, disappears for a moment. He refills his tumbler and drinks, chuckling sardonically as he does so] Ha, ha, ha! [She returns with the key, which he pockets] The bell that rings in your maid's room —? [She points to the bell-rope hanging beside the passage-door] Good. [Motioning to her to go] Now — [She is going toward the other door; he detains her] Hist! [Thoughtfully] If anything unusual should occur, remember that we were simply discussing books and pictures in the Italian garden before dinner.

DUCHESS [*intently*]. Books and pictures — of course. [*In an outburst*] Oh, you are certain you can save my reputation?

QUEX [*politely*]. Yours at least, my dear Duchess. Sleep well.

[*She is about to open the door when a thought strikes her and she again runs up to the bed*]

DUCHESS. Ah —!

QUEX. Hey?

[*She returns, carrying her night-dress case — a thing of white satin with a monogram and coronet embroidered upon it. She holds it up to him in explanation; he nods, and she lets herself out. He immediately locks the door at which she has departed and slips the key into his waistcoat pocket. This done, he pulls the bell-rope communicating with the maid's room and takes up a position against the wall so that the opening of the passage door conceals him from the view of the person entering. After a pause the door is opened and SOPHY appears. The frills of her night-dress peep out from under the Mandarin's robe, and she is wearing a pair of scarlet cloth slippers; altogether she presents an odd, fantastic figure. She pauses in the doorway hesitatingly, then steadies herself and, with a defiant air, stalks into the bedroom. Directly she has moved away, QUEX softly closes the door, locks it, and pockets the key. Meanwhile SOPHY, looking about the bedroom for the DUCHESS, discovers the paper upon the bed. She picks it up, reads it, and replaces it, and, coming back into the boudoir, encounters QUEX*]

SOPHY. Oh!

QUEX [*with a careless nod*]. Ah?

SOPHY [*recovering herself, and speaking with a contemptuous smile*]. So her Grace has packed herself off to Mrs. Eden's room. [*Firmly*] Who rang for me, please?

QUEX. I rang.

SOPHY. You? what for?

QUEX. Oh, you and I are going to have a cosy little chat together.

SOPHY [*haughtily*]. I don't understand you.

QUEX. We'll understand each other well enough, in a minute.

[*He lights another cigar, seats himself upon the sofa, and she moves to the back of the room, eyeing him distrustfully*]

QUEX. Now then! You've got the key-hole, have you?

SOPHY [*slightly embarrassed*].

QUEX [*sharply*]. Eh?

SOPHY [*defiantly*]. Yes; you have.

QUEX. Ah. And I should like to know a little more, while we are on the delicate subject of spying. I found you behind the cypress this evening before dinner —

SOPHY. Well?

QUEX. You had just at the moment returned to the Italian when you said.

SOPHY. Yes, so I said.

QUEX. As a matter of fact, I have been there some time, I presume.

SOPHY. A minute or two.

QUEX. Heard anything?

SOPHY [*laughing maliciously*]. Oh, ha! I heard her Grace say, "to-night!" [*faintly mimicking the DUCHESS*] — "I was enough for me."

QUEX. Quite so. You told her to liberate lie, then, when I questioned you?

SOPHY. Yes.

QUEX. Earlier in the evening you played a manicure game of yours — nothing but a damned cunning trick, eh?

SOPHY. I beg you won't understand my language.

QUEX. A trick, eh?

SOPHY. Certainly.

QUEX. You wanted — what?

SOPHY [*disdainfully*]. A kiss, a squeeze of the waist — anything of that sort would have done.

QUEX. Oh, would it? You didn't get what you wanted, though.

SOPHY. No; I suppose you frightened.

QUEX [*angrily*]. What!

SOPHY. Too many people about you.

QUEX [*stifling his annoyance*]. If I had — [*with a wave of the hand*] — of course you would have taken, perhaps.

SOPHY [*with an air of great pride*]. Complained at once to Lady O.

QUEX. As it is — what do you propose of doing now?

About you and her Grace?

[scowling]. Yes.

Oh, tell the ladies in the first thing.

[again putting a check upon Ha, ha! Why do you behave in this contemptible way?

It isn't contemptible.

Isn't it?

Not under the circumstances.

What circumstances?

[hotly]. A wicked man like me engaged to a sweet girl like Miss

I see. [Politely] You don't object to the engagement?

Should think not!

Always done your best to please Miss Eden's mind against me,

Always let her know my feelings for you. And I was right!

Right?

This very day, poor thing, saying how proud she is of you for having turned over a new leaf for her sake; and I told what your feelings are worth. Yes, I was right!

I can prove it!

She rises; she hastily places herself on the other side of the chair]

Look here! [Leaning against the chair being between him and

What will you take to hold my tongue?

Nothing.

Oh, but wait. This isn't a matter of a handful of sovereigns. I'll give you a couple of thousand pounds to get out about this.

No, thank you, my lord.

Four thousand.

[shaking her head]. No.

Five.

No.

How much?

Not twenty thousand. I'm perfectly comfortable off, my lord, but I wouldn't accept a penny of money. All I wish is to save myself from marrying a man who isn't fit for her. And that I intend doing.

They stand looking at each other for a moment, silently; then he walks away, thoughtfully]

[in an altered tone]. Come here.

[with an eye on the door]. Certainly.

As you please. Miss Full-

SOPHY. I hear you.

QUEX. I should like to settle this business with you pleasantly — if possible. Allow me to say this. I don't think I am quite such an atrocious person as you appear to believe; in fact I can assure you I am not.

SOPHY [gathering her robe about her and advancing a few steps]. You must excuse me, my lord, but — [glancing round the room] you evidently forget where you are.

QUEX. No, I don't; but I tell you — I tell you sincerely — that my visit to her Grace to-night was an innocent one.

SOPHY [turning her head away, in great disdain]. Really!

QUEX. Really. You won't accept my money?

SOPHY. No, indeed, I will not.

QUEX. Very well. Ha! it's an odd attitude for a man like myself to adopt toward — [indicating SOPHY by a motion of the hand] But I make an appeal to you.

SOPHY [elevating her eyebrows]. Appeal?

QUEX [with simple feeling and dignity]. I love Miss Eden. I would be a good husband to that young lady. Let me off.

SOPHY. Let you off?

QUEX. Don't tell on me. Don't try to rob me of Miss Eden. Let me off.

SOPHY. I'm sorry to say I can't, my lord.

QUEX. You won't?

SOPHY. I won't. [With a slight inclination of the head QUEX turns away and stands leaning against the settee with his back toward SOPHY. The clock strikes the quarter-of-an-hour. There is a short silence] If your lordship has quite done with me —? [He makes no response. She tosses her head] I wish you good-night, my lord. [She goes to the passage-door and turns the handle] It's locked. This door's locked. [Looking at him] The door's locked. [Rattling at the door-handle] Where's the key? [Searching about on the floor near the door] Where's the —? [Coming forward a step or two] Has your lordship got the key of this door? [Still obtaining no answer, she stands staring at him for a moment; then she goes quickly to the other door and tries the handle. As she does so, QUEX turns sharply and, leaning upon the back of the settee, watches her.

After shaking the door-handle vigorously, she wheels round and faces him, indignantly] What's the meaning of this?

QUEX [grimly]. Ah!

SOPHY. Oh ——! [She sweeps round to avoid him, and then runs into the bedroom. When she has gone he seats himself in the chair by the writing-table in a lazy attitude, his legs stretched out, his hands in his pockets. After a moment or two she returns breathlessly] I'm locked in!

QUEX. Yes.

SOPHY. You have locked me in!

QUEX. Yes.

SOPHY. How dare you!

QUEX. Why, you didn't think you were going to have it all your own way, did you, Sophy?

SOPHY. I'll thank you to be less familiar. Let me out.

QUEX. Not I.

SOPHY. You let me out directly.

QUEX [pointing a finger at her]. You'll gain nothing by raging, my good girl. Ha! now you appreciate the curiously awkward position in which you have placed yourself.

SOPHY. I've placed myself in no ——

QUEX. Oh, come, come! Taking me at my blackest, I'm not quite the kind of man that a young woman who prides herself upon her respectability desires to be mixed up with in this fashion.

SOPHY. Mixed up with!

QUEX. Well —— [stretching out his arms] here we are, you know.

SOPHY. Here we are!

QUEX. You and I, dear Sophy. [Putting his leg over the arm of his chair] Now just sit down ——

SOPHY. I sha'n't.

QUEX. While I picture to you what will happen in the morning.

SOPHY. In the morning?

QUEX. In a few hours' time. In the first place, you will be called in your room. You won't be there.

SOPHY. Won't I!

QUEX. No. You won't be there. A little later my man will come to my room. I sha'n't be there. At about the same hour, her Grace will require your attendance. Where will you be? She will then, naturally, desire to return to her own apartments. You are intelligent enough, I fancy, to imagine the rest. [After a brief pause, she breaks into a peal of soft, derisive laughter] I am

deeply flattered by your enjoyment of the prospect.

SOPHY. Ha, ha, ha! why, take me for a fool!

QUEX. Why?

SOPHY. Why, can't you see being found together like this anywhere, would do for you for me?

QUEX [rising]. Of course [Advancing to her] But, my dear I am already done for. You are for that. And so, if I have to my last shred of character, I will in association with a woman of my class rather than with a lady of the highest esteem.

SOPHY [after a pause]. How do you deed?

QUEX. Yes. Yes, indeed.

SOPHY [with a shade less coolly]. Ha, ha! if your lordship thought to frighten me, you've got hold of the wrong customer. Ha, ha, ha! three things you haven't reckoned on. I can assure you. Here's one. Miss Muriel exactly what I have between you and your Duchess in the garden this evening.

QUEX [grinding his teeth]. [Involuntarily making a threatening movement toward her] You did, you did, did you?

SOPHY [cowering over the settle].

QUEX [recovering himself].

did, did you?

SOPHY [facing him defiantly]. I did.

QUEX [coolly]. Well? and what? You listen to a conversation carried on in an open spot, from which the most chievious ears manage to detect the phrase "to-night." My explanation is absurdly simple.

SOPHY [derisively]. Ha, ha! ha, ha, ha! I daresay!

QUEX. Yes. You see, I told her Grace that I would send a messenger to her room to-night —— to-night. The messenger had gone to bed; I brought it intending to hand it to Mrs. Eden, her maid. In the meantime, the messenger had joined Mrs. Eden and was now with you here.

SOPHY. You couldn't tell me such an abominable lie!

QUEX [imperturbably]. I told you here. And then —— what is the sequel to the story? [Shrugging his shoulders] I'm a wicked man

are an undeniably pretty girl — devil dared me.

Oh ——!

[*taking up the bottle of champagne* And an excellent banquet you need to provide for the occasion. *the label*] "Félix Poubelle, 'Or." It will appear, I am that you had been preparing for entertainment of some amorous

[*snapping her fingers at him*]. Ah! Oh, the whole house shall at that is your Duchess's cham-

Excuse me — Mr. Brewster, er, will disprove that tale. You put this out of him on your own remember.

[*disconcerted*]. Oh — ah, yes

For yourself, my dear Sophy. [*falteringly*]. Yes, but — but I do it.

She made you do it! [*Replacing bottle, sternly*] And who, pray, put your word, upon this or any hint, against that of a lady of position of the Duchess of Strood? *He walks away from her and examines the books upon the writing-table. She sits on the settee, a blank expression upon her face*

[*after a little consideration, her brow with the back of her hand* At any rate, my darling — Muriel — would quickly see a horrid trick of this sort.

I bet you a dozen boxes of a case of your manicure instrument at she doesn't.

I said to her to-day, at my time I was certain, if I could meet her in some quiet spot I could get it of you.

[*under his breath, glaring at her* ——! [*Coolly*] Oh, now I understand. Yes, my dear, but Miss Eden scarcely likely to believe that a girl would carry her devotion to extent. Good heavens! why, Muriel ——! [*She pulls her robe sharply*] And a woman who raises herself, recollect, is never led by her own character, always companion's.

He starts to her feet and paces the room, uttering cries of anger and indignation. He continues to interest himself in the books

SOPHY. Oh! no, no! my darling wouldn't think it of me! when I've abused you so continually! she surely couldn't! oh! oh! [*With flashing eyes*] Now, look here, my lord! you don't really imagine that I'm going to stick in this room with you patiently all through the night, do you?

QUEX. How do you propose to avoid it?

SOPHY [*pointing to the passage-door*]. As true as I'm alive, if you don't unlock that door, I — I — I'll scream the place down!

QUEX. Why scream? [*Pointing to the bell-rope which hangs beside the door*] There's the bell. I daresay a servant or two are still up and about. You'd rouse the house quicker in that way.

SOPHY. Much obliged to you for the hint. I will — I will —— [*She goes to the bell-rope and grasps it; then she looks round and sees him calmly turning the leaves of a book he has selected. She stares at him, with sudden misgiving*] Ha, now we shall see how much your grand scheme amounts to!

QUEX. We shall. Ring the bell.

SOPHY [*blankly*]. What do you mean?

QUEX. Pooh, my dear! ring, ring, ring! or yell! You won't be the first semi-circumspect young person who has got herself into a scrape and then endeavoured to save herself by raising a hullabaloo.

[*She slowly takes her hand from the bell-rope and moves a step or two toward him*]

SOPHY. Oh, that's what you'd try to make out, is it? [*He raises his eyes from his book and gives her a significant look. Leaning upon the arm of the settee, she says faintly*] You — you ——!

QUEX. Yes, I tell you again, my dear, you have got yourself into a shocking mess. You've got me into a mess, and you've got yourself in a mess.

SOPHY [*pulling herself up and advancing to him till she faces him*]. You — you are an awful blackguard, my lord.

QUEX. Thank you, my dear. But you're not far wrong — I was a blackguard till I met Miss Eden; and now, losing Miss Eden, perhaps I'm going to be a bigger blackguard than before. At the same time, you know, there's not much to choose between us; for you're a low spy, an impudent, bare-faced liar, a common kitchen-cat who wriggles into the best rooms, gets herself fondled, and then spits. [*Passing her and throw-*

ing himself, full-length, upon the settee and settling himself to read] Therefore I've no compunction in making you pay your share of this score, my dear Sophy — none whatever.

[She walks feebly to the passage-door and stands rattling the handle in an uncertain way. At last she breaks down and cries a little]

SOPHY. Oh! oh! oh! let me go, my lord. [He makes no response] Do let me go — please! will you? [Approaching him and wiping her eyes upon the sleeve of her nightdress] I hope your lordship will kindly let me go.

QUEX [shortly]. No.

SOPHY [steadying herself]. I don't want to rouse the house at this time o' night if I can help it —

QUEX. Don't you?

SOPHY. Though I am certain I can make my story good anyway. But I'd rather your lordship let me out without the bother — [Piteously] Do! [He turns a leaf of his book. She speaks defiantly] Very well! very well! here I sit then! [Seating herself] We'll see who tires first, you or I! you or I! [Again snapping her fingers at him] Bah! you horror! you — horror!

QUEX [raising himself on his elbow]. Will you have this sofa? [She gives him a fierce look] A glass of your wine?

[She rises, with a stamp of the foot, and once more paces the room. He sips his wine and resettles himself. She goes distractedly from one object to another, now leaning upon a chair, then against the pillar of the cheval-glass. Ultimately she comes to the bell-rope and fingers it again irresolutely]

SOPHY [faintly]. My lord —! [He remains silent. She releases the bell-rope] Oh—h—h! [She pauses by the settee, looking down upon him as though she would strike him; then she walks away, and, seating herself in the chair by the bedside, drops her head upon the bed. The clock tinkles the half-hour. There is a short silence. Suddenly she rises, uttering a sharp cry, with her hand to her heart] Oh! [panting] oh! oh!

QUEX [looking at her]. What now?

SOPHY. Valma!

QUEX. Valma?

SOPHY. Mr. Valma! oh, you know he is in the house!

QUEX. He! what's he doing here?

SOPHY. The housekeeper's permission to sleep here. You [Stamping her foot] Don't you

QUEX [sitting up, alertly]. Jealous friend, the palmist. The premises, hey?

SOPHY [distractedly]. Let oh, yes, he is jealous of me, jealous of me, and we've had a row about you as it is —

QUEX. Ah!

SOPHY. Oh, this would ruin Valma! oh, if your lordship has any feeling for me, don't let me think that I'm a — that I'm — [She is sitting down on her knees before him] I won't tell on you! I promise if you'll only let me go! I will not say a word about you and the house! I take my solemn oath I'll not say a word!

QUEX [rising]. Ha! [Calmly] my dear Sophy, I wasn't aware your fiancé is in the house. Your situation comes home to you more poignantly now, does it?

SOPHY [rising and going to the door]. Unlock the door! what key?

QUEX. Wait, wait, wait! Am I going to keep your mouth shut? Are you?

SOPHY [rattling the door-handle]. Yes. Unlock it!

QUEX. Don't be in such a

SOPHY. I give you my word —

QUEX [thoughtfully]. Tsch, tsch! [Sharply, with a snap of the tongue] Yes — by Jove —! [Pointing to the chair by the writing-table] Sit down. [Imperatively] Sit down. [Wonderingly] He goes to the table, takes a plain sheet of paper and lays it out for her. Then he hands her a pen as I tell you.

SOPHY [tremblingly]. What?

QUEX [pointing to the ink-bottle] [Dictating] "My lord." [She looks at him as he dictates] "I am truly obliged to you —"

SOPHY. Yes.

QUEX. "For your great kindness —"

SOPHY [turning]. Eh?

QUEX [sternly]. Go on. [She looks at him] "For your great liberality, and more availing myself of it I quit —"

SOPHY [weakly]. Oh! [After a pause] Yes.

"I quite understand that friendship comes to an end." [She faces him] Go on.
 Our friendship!
 Yes.
 Our — friendship!
 Yes.
 I won't.
 Very well.
 How dare you try to make such a thing! [He turns from book in hand, resumes his position on the sofa. She approaches him, falteringly] What would with that, if I did write it?
 Simply hold it in my possession as security for your silence, after my marriage with Miss then return it to you.
 Oh, won't your lordship
 [contemptuously]. Trust you! pause, she returns to the writing-table, takes up her pen again] Where
 [feebly]. "I quite under-
 "That our friendship comes to an end." [She writes. He rises and approaches her shoulder] "While thanking again for past and present
 [groaning as she writes]. Oh!
 "I undertake not to annoy you in the future —"
 Oh!
 "Upon any pretext whatsoever yours respectfully —" [After the completion of the letter] vaguely — [with a wave of the hand] Monday afternoon." Blot it away! That's right. [She reads the letter with staring eyes. He comes to him and yields the letter and he folds it neatly and puts it in his breast-pocket] Thank you. I need detain you no longer.
 [with a gasp]. Ah! stop a moment! I won't!
 What's the matter with you?
 [wildly]. Why, it's like selling my wife! Just to get myself out of this, I'm simply handing her over to you! I do it! I won't! [She rushes to the door and tugs at it again and again] I won't marry you! she sha'n't! I sha'n't, and she sha'n't! [He pulls the bell-rope and facing him] Oh, let your precious Duchess be free! After all, what does it

matter who the woman is you've been sporting with, so that Miss Muriel is kept from falling into your clutches! Yes, I'll make short work of you, my lord. The ladies shall hear from my mouth of the lively half-hour I've spent with you, and how I've suddenly funk'd the consequences and raised a hulla-balloo! Now, my lord! now then! now then!

[His astonishment has given way to admiration; he gazes at her as if spell-bound]

QUEX [after a pause, during which she stands before him panting]. By God, you're a fine plucked 'un! I've never known a better. [Resolutely] No, my girl, I'm damned if you shall suffer! Quick! listen! pull yourself together!

SOPHY [hysterically]. Eh? eh?

QUEX [taking her letter from his pocket and thrusting it into her hand]. Here's your letter! take it — I won't have it. [Going quickly to the passage-door, unlocking it, and throwing the door open] There you are!

SOPHY [sobbing]. Oh! oh!

[There is a hurried, irregular knocking at the door]

QUEX [gripping her arm]. Hush! [In a whisper] Call out — wait!

SOPHY [raising her voice — unsteadily]. Wait — one moment!

QUEX [in her ear, as he gives her the key of the door]. Say the Duchess is with Mrs. Jack; say she wants her letters brought to her in the morning! say anything —

SOPHY. Yes, yes. [Weeping and shaking and gasping, she goes to the door and unlocks it. He tip-toes into the bedroom and turns out the light there. She opens the door an inch or two] Yes?

TWO VOICES [a man's and a woman's]. What is it? what's the matter?

SOPHY [steadying herself with an effort]. Nothing. Only her Grace has gone to Mrs. Eden's room and wishes her letters taken there in the morning most particularly — see?

THE VOICES. What did you ring like that for? Thought the place was afire!

SOPHY. Oh, don't make a fuss about nothing. You servants are an old-fashioned lot. Bong swor!

THE VOICES [angrily]. Oh, good-night.

SOPHY. Ha, ha, ha!

[She closes the door and totters away from it, sobbing hysterically, as QUEX comes to her]

QUEX [*kindly*]. Be off. Go to bed. Serve me how you please. Miss Fullgarney, upon my soul, I — I humbly beg your pardon.

SOPHY [*passing him*]. Oh! oh! oh! [*Turning to him*] Oh, God bless you! You — you — you're a gentleman! I'll do what I can for you!

[*She staggers to the passage-door and disappears, closing the door behind her. Then he extinguishes the remaining light, and cautiously lets himself out at the other door*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT IV

The scene is the same, in every respect, as that of the First Act.

[*On the right MISS CLARIDGE is manicuring a young gentleman. On the left MISS MOON is putting her manicure-table in order, as if she has recently disposed of a customer. MISS LIMBIRD is again at her desk, busy over accounts. The door-gong sounds and, after a short interval, QUEX and FRAYNE enter, preceded by MISS HUDDLE. FRAYNE appears particularly depressed and unwell*]

QUEX [*nodding to MISS LIMBIRD*]. Good-morning.

MISS LIMBIRD. Morning.

QUEX. [*To MISS HUDDLE*] Miss Fullgarney has not yet arrived, you say?

MISS HUDDLE. Not yet.

QUEX [*looking at his watch*]. Twenty minutes to twelve.

MISS MOON. Yes, we've never known Miss Fullgarney to be so late at her business. I do hope she hasn't been run over and injured.

MISS HUDDLE. Or murdered by tramps.

QUEX. My dear young lady!

MISS MOON. Well, one does read such things in the ha'penny papers.

MISS HUDDLE. And she went down to Richmond yesterday afternoon, you know — to Fauncey Court.

QUEX. Of course I know — and slept there.

MISS MOON. Oh, did she?

QUEX. And has come up this morning.

MISS HUDDLE. Then she gone home, I expect, to change.

MISS MOON. That's what she [*Slightly disappointed*] Well, have been sorry if anything happened to her.

QUEX. Naturally.

MISS HUDDLE. So should I. I'm quite new here.

MISS MOON. It never gives me pleasure to hear of people having their limbs crushed.

MISS HUDDLE. Or being run over by tramps.

MISS MOON. Won't your take a chair? [*To FRAYNE, who wandered down to the window*] sir?

[*The young gentleman, having his manicuring being finished, has just paid MISS LIMBIRD and has departed, followed by MISS CLARIDGE carrying her bag and towel. The door-gong sounds*]

QUEX. Is that she?

MISS MOON. No; that young gentleman leaving.

[*MISS MOON, carrying her bag and towel, and MISS HUDDLE, after exchanging a few words with MISS LIMBIRD, who has just paid her, enter*]

FRAYNE. [*To QUEX, who looks very revoltingly hideous these gals this morning*]

QUEX. Same as yesterday. Very seedy.

FRAYNE [*closing his eyes*]. Oh, I'm awfully seedy. [*Sitting*] I'm in a state of malaria, I fear.

QUEX. Shame of me to have you out of bed and bothered with my affairs. [*Sitting*] But I can't quite understand, Chick, how so profoundly anxious I am as to what Miss Fullgarney will adopt for me to-day.

FRAYNE. Quite, quite. Has she?

QUEX. Yes?

FRAYNE. What champagne did we drink last night at Richmond?

QUEX [*with some bitterness*]. "Félix Poubelle, Carte d'Or."

FRAYNE [*shaking his head*]. I can't take champagne.

QUEX. Can't you?

FRAYNE. I mean I oughtn't to.

QUEX. Oh. [*Referring to the account of last night's tragedy*]

what I can for you" — those e Fullgarney's words. Good y came at me like a bolt from ! Does she intend to act up , eh? — that's the question. ne'll act up to them, Chick? RE. Have you met the ladies ning?

Yes — except Muriel, who ow at breakfast.

RE. How did you find 'em?

Amiability itself; they know [Rising and looking down

AYNE] You see, Chick, all that ullgarney has to do — if she ready done it — is to tell a aradiddle to Muriel concerning ts of last night. Well, in effect, promised to do that, hasn't she? ntly] Eh?

RE [gloomily]. Frankly, Harry, n't be in the least surprised if sold you.

[his jaw falling]. You wouldn't? RE. No.

Phew! I should. [Warmly] , I should!

RE. I have conceived a great to her — a long, scraggy gal.

[with enthusiasm]. As full of s a thoroughbred!

RE [closing his eyes]. I can her elbows; sharp, pointed — the barbed fence of the spite-an.

Pooh! yesterday she was

RE [rising painfully]. Yester-! [Gravely] Harry, do you

ere are moments when I feel am changing toward the sex; fancy I can discern the skele-it were, through the rounded

. You!

RE. Yes, this novel sentiment oubtedly gaining possession of d friend — gradually, perhaps, ly.

[regarding him searchingly]. me, Chick — did you turn into steak when you got back from nd last night?

RE. For an hour. Oh, a great

. What, a little whiskey on the champagne?

RE [gazing pathetically at QUEX ery eyes]. A good deal of cham-nderneath a lot of whiskey.

[The door-gong sounds]

QUEX. Who's this? [He walks to the entrance, and looks into the further room] The Fullgarney.

[He returns to his former position, as SOPHY enters quickly, followed by MISS CLARIDGE, MISS MOON, and MISS HUDDLE. SOPHY — dressed as at the end of the First Act — is pale, red-eyed, and generally unstrung. She comes to QUEX, disconcerted by his presence]

SOPHY [confronting him]. Oh, good-morning.

QUEX. May I beg a few moments —?

SOPHY. Er — certainly. I'll just take off my things —

[He joins FRAYNE. She goes across the room where she is surrounded by her girls]

MISS CLARIDGE. Oh, Miss Fullgarney, how ill you look!

MISS MOON. You do seem queer!

MISS HUDDLE. Just as if you were sickening for something.

MISS LIMBIRD [coming between MISS CLARIDGE and SOPHY]. Quite ghostly!

SOPHY. I'm all right, girls; I've had a bad night, that's all. [Giving her umbrella to MISS CLARIDGE and her bag to MISS MOON, who passes it to MISS HUDDLE] Here! hi! take that beastly bag. [To MISS LIMBIRD, who is removing her hat] Oh, don't waggle my head, whatever you do! [To MISS MOON, who is pulling at her jacket] Tear the thing off. [Stripping off her gloves, and speaking in a whisper] Girls, I don't want to be disturbed for five minutes.

MISS LIMBIRD. Very well, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY [glancing at QUEX and FRAYNE, who are now looking out of the window, with their backs toward her]. If Miss Eden should happen to turn up before I'm free, just mention who I'm engaged with, will you?

MISS MOON. Yes, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY. That'll do. [With sudden fierceness] What are you all staring at? Haven't any of you ever slept in a strange bed?

[The girls retreat hastily, each carrying an article belonging to SOPHY]

QUEX [advancing a step or two]. I am exceedingly sorry to see you looking so fatigued.

SOPHY [faintly]. Didn't close my eyes the whole night. [She drops the

portière over the entrance, and approaches
 QUEX] Well, my lord?

QUEX. I have ventured to call upon you, Miss Fullgarney, in the hope of ratifying the excellent understanding with which we parted last night.

SOPHY [*pointing to FRAYNE*]. Well, but — er —

QUEX. Oh — oh, yes — [To FRAYNE, who has turned away] Frayne — [To SOPHY] I have taken my old and trusted friend, Sir Chichester Frayne, into my confidence in this regrettable business.

SOPHY [*dubiously*]. Indeed?

QUEX. I thought it desirable there should be a third party —

SOPHY. P'raps you're right. [*Cuttingly*] One needs a third party when one has the honour of meeting your lordship — [*checking herself*]. Excuse me.

QUEX [*pleasantly, with a slight bow of acknowledgment*]. Before we go further, I may tell you that her Grace has informed me of what passed between you this morning.

SOPHY. Nothing passed.

QUEX. Precisely.

SOPHY. The lady beamed upon me, for all the world as if she was an angel spending a Saturday-to-Monday here below; and I dressed her hair for her just as if I didn't want to tear it out by the roots. And then she turned up her eyes and said she hoped every happiness would attend me, and went downstairs to prayers.

QUEX. Will you allow me to — to thank you?

SOPHY [*frigidly*]. You needn't. [*Abruptly*] Oh, by-the-by, the lady gave me a — a keepsake, she called it. [*Endeavouring to extract some bulky object from her pocket*] I mean to burn the thing, once I've found out what's inside it. But I can't get it open. Here it is.

[*She exhibits the little box, covered with brocade, which QUEX has returned to the DUCHESS in the previous Act*]

QUEX [*surprised*]. By Jove!

SOPHY [*simply*]. Eh?

QUEX. Er — I was wondering what she can have put in that little box.

SOPHY. Yes, I wonder. [*Pulling at the lid*] It's locked.

QUEX. I fancy it has one of those Bramah locks which snap. I may have a key — [*He produces his key-ring and,*

promptly selecting a key, unlocks Fortunate coincidence.

[*She opens the box and takes out the first thing that presents itself* — the blue silk garter with the diamond buckle]

SOPHY [*scandalized*]. Oh, my goodness! I beg your pardon.

[*She leaves him hurriedly and returns with the box in the cabinet*]

QUEX [*quietly to FRAYNE*]. she has passed the souvenirs on to Fullgarney!

FRAYNE [*bitterly*]. How woman!

QUEX. Some women.

FRAYNE [*in disgust*]. Pah!

QUEX. Yesterday she was a

FRAYNE [*waving the past from him*]. Yesterday — [*with a slight hiccup*] — [*Turning away apologetically*] — I don't like to be in this room —

[*He walks away, as SOPHY looks after him*]

QUEX. [To SOPHY] Well, I must detain you longer, Miss Fullgarney. But there is, of course, one point which I should like to feel completely cleared. You have seen Miss Edith?

SOPHY. No; not since last evening.

QUEX [*anxiously*]. When do you expect to see her?

SOPHY [*looking away*]. I'm rather busy expecting her to pop in here during the day.

QUEX. Quite so. And then —?

SOPHY [*facing him candidly*]. Your lordship told me last night that your little visit to the Duchess was perfectly innocent one?

QUEX. Absolutely innocent. [*Looking at her*] I fear I cannot go further than that.

FRAYNE [*fanning himself with a handkerchief*]. By gad, why not? We are in Miss Fullgarney's [To SOPHY] His lordship went to Grace's apartment solely to return gifts which he had accepted from her — ah — dim, distant past, say adieu.

SOPHY [*witheringly*]. Ah, I know. It was a double-faced thing [*looking at QUEX*] — QUEX [*reluctantly*]; but p'raps it has been a little down on you.

QUEX [*meekly*]. You have it in your power to atone for that amply.

SOPHY [*half feelingly, half scornfully*]. At any rate, you behaved, in the end, like a gentleman to me last night. And so — when I see Miss Mur-

Yes?
[deliberately]. I am going to
lie.

[with some emotion]. Miss Full-
I — I —

Oh, I said I'd do what I can
[Uncomfortably] And this is
do.

[light-heartedly]. All!

Just to give you a chance.

Chance! [Drawing a deep
You place my happiness be-
neger.

[impulsively, offering him her
I wish you luck, my lord.

He takes her hand and wrings it]
NE [who has opened the window
Hallo!

[turning nervously]. What

NE [looking out]. Isn't this
end, Captain Bastling?

Bastling?

NE. At that window?

FRAYNE moves away to the cir-
cular table and sniffs at a bottle
of scent. QUEX goes to the
window]

[looking out]. Yes. What's old
up to there?

[guiltily]. I — I heard Captain
mention that he was thinking
g his hand read by Mr. Valma
ne or other.

No! ha, ha, ha! [Leaving the

He doesn't see me; I won't
him. [To SOPHY, jocularly]

transfer one's self from the mani-
the palmist without the trouble
ng on one's gloves.

Ha, ha! y—yes.

[pausing on his way to the en-
Miss Fullgarney, may I ask if
Mr. Valma have fixed upon the
your marriage?

Oh, we sha'n't get married
ile — not for a year or more, I

[graciously]. In that case, I
pe to have the pleasure, and
ilege, of being present at your
— with my wife.

[hanging her head]. Thank

Chick — [He goes out]

NE [turning to SOPHY with dig-
Miss Fullgarney, one thing I
say. It is that your behaviour
orning completely obliterates —

[He is cut short by another hiccup
and, with a bow, withdraws.
POLLITT appears at the window.
SOPHY goes to the entrance, and
watches the departure of QUEX
and FRAYNE. POLLITT enters
the room. The door-gong
sounds]

POLLITT. Sophy.

SOPHY [turning]. Oh! Valma, dear?

POLLITT [with a heavy brow]. Captain
Bastling is waiting at my place, for
Miss Eden.

SOPHY [subdued]. Is he?

POLLITT. Dearest, during my brief
but, I pride myself, honourable associa-
tion with palmistry, this is the first time
my rooms have been used for this sort
of game.

SOPHY. This sort of game?

POLLITT. Other Professors have
stooped to it, but I — oh, no, it is
playing palmistry a little bit too low
down.

SOPHY [unhappily]. Surely it's quite
harmless, love — a couple of young
people meeting to say good-by.

POLLITT. From what you've told
me, I greatly doubt that it *will* be
good-by.

SOPHY. D—d—do you?

POLLITT [hotly]. Anyhow I resent
your being the go-between of this
gallant captain and a girl betrothed to
another man — you who are naturally
such a thorough lady!

SOPHY. Oh — oh, Valma — — !

[She drops her head upon his
shoulder and whimpers]

POLLITT. Dearest, what have I said?

SOPHY. Valma, I've made up my
mind. I intend to do exactly what you
wish, in the future, in everything. I'm
going to give up squatting down here
manicuring gentlemen —

POLLITT. Sophy!

SOPHY. And shall simply sail about
these rooms, overlooking my girls in
the plainest of silks. And never again
will I interfere in an underhand way
in other people's affairs on any account
whatever. [Putting her arms round his
neck] Yes, you shall find me a lady —
a lady —

POLLITT [tenderly]. Ah — — ! [The
door-gong sounds. She raises her head
and dries her eyes hurriedly] Is that
Miss Eden?

[He crosses to the window as she
goes to the entrance. Miss
LIMBIRD appears]

MISS LIMBIRD. [To SOPHY] Here's Miss Eden.

SOPHY [with a nod]. Give me half a minute with her; then I'm at liberty. [MISS LIMBIRD disappears. SOPHY comes to POLLITT] I'll send Muriel across directly.

[He departs. MISS LIMBIRD returns and, holding the portière aside, admits MURIEL. MURIEL is wearing a veil. MISS LIMBIRD withdraws. SOPHY meets MURIEL; they kiss each other undemonstratively]

SOPHY [constrainedly]. Well, darling?

MURIEL [in the same way]. Well, Sophy?

SOPHY. You're here, then?

MURIEL. As you see.

SOPHY. Any difficulty?

MURIEL [in a hard voice]. No. The Duchess and Mrs. Jack were coming to town shopping, and Lady Owbridge proposed that she and I should tuck ourselves on to them.

SOPHY. How have you got rid of 'em?

MURIEL. Spoken the truth, for once — my head really does throb terribly. They think I've run in here to sit quietly with you while they — [Suddenly] Oh, be quick, Sophy!

SOPHY. Quick, dear?

MURIEL. Why don't you tell me?

SOPHY. Tell you —?

MURIEL. About last night — this woman —

SOPHY. Her Grace?

MURIEL. Yes, yes.

SOPHY. Oh, why, I haven't anything to tell, darling.

MURIEL. Haven't anything to —?

SOPHY. You see, I couldn't help remembering what you'd called me — mean, and despicable, and all the rest of it; and the feeling came over me that you were right, that I had been sneaky. And so, after I'd attended to her Grace, I — I went straight to bed.

MURIEL [sitting]. Oh, yes. Then you didn't attempt to — to watch?

SOPHY. No.

MURIEL [faintly]. Oh!

SOPHY. Aren't you glad?

MURIEL. Glad!

SOPHY. Why, you were certain that the word or two I'd overheard meant nothing wrong.

MURIEL. I said so.

SOPHY. Said so!

MURIEL [turning to her with clenched

hands]. Yes, but at the same time I put the dreadful idea into my mind, Sophy, and I've not been able to miss it for one moment since.

SOPHY [under her breath]. Oh!

MURIEL [lifting her veil]. You can see what I've been through.

SOPHY [looking at her]. I'm so sorry.

MURIEL [looking at SOPHY]. I look rather washed out too. Did you slept, either?

SOPHY [turning her head away]. I slept over well. [Falteringly] Then all, it would have been better if I had spied on her?

MURIEL. Anything — even if I had — would have been preferable to this certainty.

SOPHY. [To herself, her jaw dropping] Oh —!

MURIEL [looking toward the door]. Has he arrived?

SOPHY. Yes.

[MURIEL rises, then sits down]

MURIEL [producing, from her pocket, a jeweller's case and showing it to SOPHY]. Do you like this? I've just bought it over the way, at Gressier's.

SOPHY. For Captain Bastling?

MURIEL [with a nod, opening the case]. A solitaire shirt-stud.

[She retains a neatly-folded piece of paper which is enclosed in the box and hands the case to SOPHY]

SOPHY. Beautiful. [Glancing at the piece of paper in MURIEL's hand] What's that?

MURIEL [unfolding the paper fully]. This goes with it.

[She holds the paper before her]

SOPHY [reading]. "To Napier."

MURIEL [withdrawing the paper]. No.

SOPHY. Mayn't I?

MURIEL [yielding the paper to SOPHY]. Yes, you may.

[MURIEL turns away and leans upon the back of the screen-chair, with her hands clasped. SOPHY places the jeweller's case upon the table]

SOPHY [reading with difficulty]. Napier from Muriel. I only saw what? You have blotted it.

MURIEL [with a sob]. Have I?

SOPHY. You've been crying.

MURIEL. Yes.

RY. "I only ——" I can't read

MURIEL *[through her tears]*.

only know — we loved in vain:

my feel — Farewell! — Farewell!"

RY *[in a low voice]*. Very nice,

RY. *[She lays the paper tenderly*

the box and goes to MURIEL. Ey-

keenly] You really are deter-

then, to wish him good-by?

MURIEL *[turning to her and weeping*

her shoulder]. Oh, Sophy! Sophy!

RY. There, there! it'll soon be

MURIEL *[raising her head]*. Over!

RY! over!

RY. And — p'raps it's all for

it, you know.

MURIEL. For the best!

RY. What I mean is, that very

we've both of us been a little

to poor Lord Quex — hard on

—

MURIEL *[indignantly]*. You say this

! *[Distractedly]* You say this,

having poisoned my mind and

me an awful night of sleepless-

and doubt. Yesterday I was as

a rock; to-day I'm as weak as

again. *[Facing SOPHY with flash-*

es] Ah, I tell you honestly you'd

not let me meet Captain Bastling

morning! you'd better not let me

! *[The door-gong sounds. BAST-*

LING *appears at the window,*

and looks into the room]

RY *[whose back is toward the win-*

dow]. No, no, you sha'n't

oss to Valma's while you're like

I'll make an excuse for you to

n Bastling ——

BASTLING *[at the window]*. Muriel!

MURIEL *[passing SOPHY swiftly]*.

! *[holding her arm]*. Darling —

MURIEL *[freeing herself]*. Release me,

! release me! ah ——!

[She joins BASTLING and they dis-

appear. As SOPHY goes to the

window and looks out after

them, QUEX enters, followed by

FRAYNE]

EX *[glancing round the room]*.

Fullgarney ——

RY *[turning sharply]*. Hey?

RY. Oh — my lord ——!

EX. I am compelled to intrude

you again. I have just met Lady

ge, with her Grace and Mrs.

in Sackville Street. My aunt

sends me with a message to Miss Eden.

SOPHY *[confused]*. M—m—Miss

Eden?

QUEX. Mrs. Eden has proposed a

lunch at Prince's, provided that Miss

Eden feels equal to — *[Looking about*

him again] Where is Miss Eden?

SOPHY. Where?

QUEX. She is here — with you.

SOPHY. N—no.

QUEX. No?

SOPHY *[with a gulp]*. I haven't seen

anything of her.

QUEX *[in an altered tone]*. Really?

SOPHY. No.

QUEX *[calmly]*. Strange.

[He walks away and joins FRAYNE.

SOPHY stealthily closes and

fastens the window]

QUEX. *[In a low voice, to FRAYNE]*

Chick —

FRAYNE. Eh?

QUEX. Miss Eden is here. Why is

the Fullgarney telling me this falsehood?

FRAYNE. You will remember I was

positive she would sell you before she'd

done with you.

QUEX *[gripping FRAYNE'S arm]*.

Don't! *[Advancing to SOPHY — po-*

litely] I understood from my aunt,

Miss Fullgarney, that her ladyship left

Miss Eden at Gressier's, the jeweller's,

less than half an hour ago.

SOPHY *[fussing with the objects upon*

the cabinet and the manicure table]. Oh?

QUEX. Miss Eden had some little

commission to discharge at Gressier's,

and intended coming across to you im-

mediately afterward.

SOPHY *[quickly]*. Ah, then she hasn't

finished her business at Gressier's yet.

QUEX. Yes, because I looked in at

the shop on my way here.

SOPHY. Funny. I can't imagine

where she's taken herself to.

QUEX *[earnestly]*. Miss Fullgar-

ney ——

SOPHY. My lord?

QUEX. I thought we had become

good friends, you and I ——?

SOPHY. So we have, I hope.

QUEX. And that you were desirous

of rendering me a service?

SOPHY. Well, aren't I, my lord?

QUEX. Are you? You know that

Miss Eden came to you directly she

left Gressier's. You know she did.

SOPHY *[after a pause — drawing a*

deep breath]. Yes, I — I own it.

QUEX *[reproachfully]*. Ah, Miss Full-

garney!

SOPHY. She has been in, and I have done you the service I promised.

QUEX [*calmly*]. You have?

SOPHY. Indeed I have, as true as I stand here. [*Steadying herself*] But the fact is — the fact is Miss Eden had a purchase to make that she didn't wish the ladies to interfere over, and — and she has run out for ten minutes. If your lordship must know where she is, she's in the Burlington.

QUEX [*very quietly*]. Oh, she has run out for a few minutes?

SOPHY. She might be a quarter of an hour.

QUEX. Not run out; *flown* out, at one of these windows.

SOPHY [*faintly*]. One of these windows?

QUEX [*pointing to the entrance*]. She has not gone out by the door.

SOPHY. What do you mean?

QUEX. Your young ladies assured me just now that Miss Eden was in this room with you. [*FRAYNE, possessed of an idea, has gone to the door in the partition. He now raps at the door gently*] No, no, Chick — please! we are not policemen.

FRAYNE [*opening the door a few inches*]. Miss Eden, I regret to learn you are suffering from headache.

SOPHY [*indignantly*]. Well, of all the liberties —!

QUEX [*angrily*]. Frayne!

FRAYNE. May I tell you of an unfailing remedy —? [*He peeps into the private room, then withdraws his head, and says to QUEX*] No.

SOPHY [*flouncing up to FRAYNE, and speaking volubly and violently*]. Now, look here, sir, I'm a busy woman — as busy and as hard-working a woman as any in London. Because you see things a bit slack Ascot week, it doesn't follow that my books, and a hundred little matters, don't want attending to. [*Sitting at the desk and opening and closing the books noisily*] And I'm certainly not going to have gentlemen, whoever they may be, marching into my place, and taking possession of it, and doubting my word, and opening and shutting doors, exactly as if they were staying in a common hotel. I'd have you to know that my establishment isn't conducted on *that* principle.

[*QUEX has been standing, with compressed lips and a frown upon his face, leaning upon the back of the chair near the cir-*

cular table. During his harangue his eyes fall upon the jeweller's case and the paper lying open upon the table. He stares at the writing for a moment, then comes to himself, and picks up both the case and the paper]

FRAYNE. [*To SOPHY, while she is going on*] My good lady, I can't be so candid on your part —

SOPHY. I don't understand you're hinting at by "a little of this and a little of that." You've already been told where Miss Eden is, and anybody who knows that if I say a thing —

FRAYNE. But when your young ladies declare —

SOPHY. I'm really not responsible for the sayings and doings of a set of stupid girls. If they didn't stare at Miss Eden go out they were asleep when they weren't asleep they're blind as I've explained till I'm hoarse. I'm very busy this morning, and I can't be extremely obliged to you two gentlemen if you'd kindly go away again a little later.

QUEX. Chick.

FRAYNE. Eh?

QUEX. I want you.

[*FRAYNE comes to QUEX, and hands him the jeweller's case and the slip of paper*]

SOPHY [*fussing over her books, oblivious of what is transpiring*]. The difficulty of conducting a business of this kind isn't sufficient to me, extra bothers and worries being piled down on one's head! What with enormous rent, and rotten debts, and heart-breaking! Here's a woman on my books, who runs an account fifteen months, with the face of an angel, and no more intends to pay than to jump over St. Paul's —

QUEX [*who again has possession of the jeweller's case and the paper*]. Fullgarney —

SOPHY. What now, my lord? My word, it is *too* bad —!

QUEX. Please come here.

SOPHY [*coming forward — no longer in the verge of tears*]. After such a long time I've had, too. I never could do my full eight hours —

QUEX. Be silent!

SOPHY. What!

QUEX. Miss Eden and Captain Fullgarney —

SOPHY. Eh?

They are acquaintances —
[With a stamp of the foot] They
terms of —

[faintly]. Oh!

[pointing to the window]. She
him at this moment — there.

[unsteadily]. Whatever are
ing, my lord? [Discovering that
he jeweller's case and the paper]

Yes, I found these upon the
[She advances, to take them from
Miss Eden left them here —
them?

[in a murmur]. Yes.

He gives them to her. She puts
them into her pocket and sits]

Come! tell me.

You — you are not the only
the field, my lord.

So I conclude.

Have pity on her!

[sternly]. How dare you!

It's more my fault than

Continue.

She has wanted to stop it,
herself for being deceitful, but I
encouraged her, egged her on.

Yes.

They've been in the habit
ing here at my place.

[again pointing to the window].
a fellow's rooms — Mr. Val-

[rising]. No, no. They've
et there, till this morning. But
young Bastling — he's going away,
in a fortnight or so, and he
to say good-by to her quietly.

[turning toward the window
Ah — — —!

[laying her hand upon his arm].
ful, my lord!

[looking at her]. Careful?

[significantly]. I know how
s to-day. If you want to send
Hong-Kong with Captain Bast-

QUEX hesitates for a moment,
then crosses to FRAYNE, to
whom he speaks apart]

Chick! how shall I act?

FRAYNE [dismally]. Dear old chap,
quite honest with you, I was not
captivated by Miss Eden when
sented me yesterday.

Tshah! What shall I do?

FRAYNE. In any event, of course,
his head has to be punched. But

it might be wise to delay doing it un-
til —

QUEX. [To SOPHY] You spoke, a
little while ago, of giving me "a chance."
I see now what was in your mind.
There's a risk, then, that this good-by
may not be final?

SOPHY [stammeringly]. W—well,
I —

QUEX [sharply]. Eh?

SOPHY [breaking down]. Oh, my
lord, recollect, she's not much more
than a girl!

QUEX. No, she is not much more
than a girl; but you — though you
and she are of the same age — you are
a woman. You know your world, up-
stairs and downstairs, boudoir and
kitchen. Yet you own you have en-
couraged her in this, made her clan-
destine meetings with this penniless
beggar possible. You —! you de-
serve to be whipped, Miss Fullgarney —
whipped!

SOPHY [facing him]. Come, my lord!
not so fast! After all, remember,
Captain Bastling may be poor, but he's
Miss Eden's match in other ways.

QUEX. Match?

SOPHY. Young, and good-looking.
Oh, and isn't it natural —?

QUEX. Quite natural — quite.
[Turning to FRAYNE] Chick, what an
ass I've been; what fools we old chaps
are, all of us! Why, if I had led the life
of a saint, it would only be necessary for
a man like this Bastling to come along,
to knock me out. Good lord, how
clear it is, when it's brought home to
you in this fashion! It isn't the scamp,
the roué, a girl shies at; it's the old
scamp, the old roué. She'll take the
young one, the blackguard with a
smooth skin and a bright eye, directly
he raises a hand — take him without a
murmur, money-hunter though he may
be. Take him! by Jove, she leaps into
his arms!

FRAYNE. D'ye mean that Bast-
ling —?

QUEX. Napier Bastling! [Breaking
into a prolonged peal of laughter] Ha,
ha, ha, ha! Chick, he's just what I
was at eight-and-twenty. Ha, ha, ha!
what I was — and worse, damn him!
— and she loves him.

SOPHY [who has been listening with
wide-open eyes and parted lips]. It's
not true! it isn't true!

QUEX [turning to her]. Isn't it!
You think so, hey? No, I suppose

you haven't experimentalized upon him; you haven't spied on him, and tempted him as you tempted me. You have never got him into a quiet corner and stuck your impudent face in his. If you had ——

SOPHY. Oh! he wouldn't ——!

[FRAYNE has walked away; QUEX now joins him]

QUEX [as he goes]. Wouldn't he! ha, ha, ha! [To FRAYNE, fiercely] What the devil am I to do, Chick?

FRAYNE. Punch his head.

SOPHY [panting]. Oh! oh! [BASTLING, indistinctly seen through the muslin blinds, appears at the window. He raps gently upon the window frame. SOPHY glances at the window] Eh—? [Under her breath] Oh! [She goes swiftly to QUEX and FRAYNE, seizes them by the arms, and pushes them toward the door in the partition, saying agitatedly] Wait there! don't come out, or make a noise ——

QUEX. What are you up to now?

SOPHY. Stay here till I find out what's happened. Oh, I'll do what I can for you!

[They enter the private room and she closes the door. Then she returns to the window, unfastens it, and retreats. BASTLING pushes open the window and comes in]

BASTLING [advancing to her excitedly]. Ah, Sophy! [Looking round] Anyone about?

SOPHY [pointing to the left]. All my girls are in there. Where is she?

BASTLING. Next door. She's sitting down, calming herself — having her cry out.

SOPHY. Crying!

BASTLING. She's all right — awfully happy. I told her I'd come and tell you.

SOPHY. Tell me ——!

BASTLING. It's settled.

SOPHY. Settled!

BASTLING. She's mine, Sophy.

SOPHY [with a gasp]. Yours!

BASTLING. We're going to be married at once — next week. We shall need your help still. Of course, it must be a secret marriage. She will follow me out by-and-by.

SOPHY [nodding dully]. Oh, yes.

BASTLING. Why, aren't you glad about it? [Smilingly] Don't you congratulate us?

SOPHY. C—certainly.

BASTLING. Good. And — hands with her] thanks to you. [A her hand] Thanks.

SOPHY [nerving herself for h Thanks!

BASTLING. A million of 'em. the matter?

SOPHY. Oh, nothing.

BASTLING. Yes, there is. C with it.

SOPHY. Well — thanks! her head] There isn't much in

BASTLING [puzzled]. Not r thanks?

SOPHY [turning away, pout think not.

BASTLING [smiling]. Oh, I owe a tremendous deal to the manicurist, and I don't intend it. Just now I'm rather hard-u ing toward the window], but I sh funds before long ——

SOPHY [turning to him with indignation]. Oh!

BASTLING. What do you want

SOPHY [after a moment's h sidling up to him]. Not money

BASTLING. Not?

SOPHY. A little more tha thanks, though.

BASTLING [looking into her eye ing softly]. Ha, ha, ha!

SOPHY [slyly]. Ha, ha, ha!

BASTLING. Thanks — differ pressed —? [She plays with of his coat and giggles. He takes in his hand] Ha, ha, ha! Sop

SOPHY. Ha, ha!

[MURIEL appears at t window and enters t noiselessly. Seeing B and SOPHY together, in surprise]

BASTLING [whose back is to dow]. I say — mind, no tales.

SOPHY [looking at MURIEL stea BASTLING's shoulder] Likely on you, isn't it?

BASTLING. Honour bright?

SOPHY. Oh, if you've any do

[He raises her face to kisses her upon the lips and lingeringly. She g a step or two, still gazi at MURIEL]

BASTLING. Eh ——?

[Following the direction eyes, he turns and ex MURIEL. The three sta moment or two witho ment]

TLING [after a pause, speaking in voice, his eyes avoiding MURIEL'S]. — ha! — I suppose every man a big mistake at least once in. I've made mine. At the same I — I — [hurriedly] — oh, I'll

[With a slight, quick bow to MURIEL, he wheels round sharply and goes out]

HY [wiping his kiss from her lips].retch! the wretch!

[The door-gong sounds] MURIEL [covering her eyes with her hand and uttering a low moan]. Oh —!

HY [hanging her head]. You see, yesterday at Fauncey Court, I tried it on with Lord Quex, and he behaved like a gentleman. So the next day he struck me that I'd treat the man in the same way, just to show that he was made of, and — well, I'm glad you came in. You might have believed me.

MURIEL [in a hard voice]. The shirt-stuff I wrote — I left them with you —

HY' [producing them]. I found them after you'd gone.

[MURIEL takes the piece of paper and tears it into small pieces. SOPHY offers her the jeweller's case]

MURIEL [haughtily]. Take that back to the jeweller's this afternoon, please, and tell him I've changed my mind. Say I've a little silver collar for my dog, please.

[She sinks into the screen-chair, with her eyes closed. Slipping the case into her pocket, SOPHY tip-toes up to the door in the partition; she opens it and beckons to QUEX, who appears with FRAYNE]

HY. [To QUEX, in a whisper] It's all nicely settled. She's said good-by to him for good. What a fuss you made about nothing!

[She points to the screen-chair; he approaches MURIEL. SOPHY and FRAYNE talk together]

QUEX [softly]. Muriel — MURIEL [opening her eyes, startled].

QUEX [brightly]. I came up to town this morning with Sir Chichester. We've just met Aunt Julia, and the rest of the family in Sackville Street. Mrs. Jack is here for lunch at Prince's. What do you say?

MURIEL [passing her hand across her eyes]. Thanks. It'll be jolly.

QUEX [gayly]. Ah!

MURIEL [laying her hand upon his sleeve]. Quex —

QUEX. Eh?

MURIEL [rising, and speaking in a low, appealing voice]. Give me your word you have been loyal to me, down to your very thought, since our engagement.

QUEX [earnestly]. Muriel, I —

MURIEL. Hush! [Giving him her hand] I believe you. [The door-gong sounds] And, look here! I haven't been quite fair, or generous, to you, I am afraid. But I am going to be different —

QUEX. After to-day!

MURIEL. From this moment. Harry —

QUEX. Hey?

MURIEL. I won't keep you till the end of the year. Marry me, and have done with it, directly the season is over, and take me away.

QUEX [bending over her hand]. Good heavens —!

[MISS LIMBIRD holds the portière aside and admits LADY OWBRIDGE, the DUCHESS OF STROOD, and MRS. EDEN. MISS LIMBIRD then returns to her desk. QUEX goes to LADY OWBRIDGE, takes her arm, and leads her forward] Aunt Julia! aunt! my dear Aunt Julia!

[The DUCHESS joins FRAYNE.

MRS. EDEN comes to MURIEL and receives the news of the hastened marriage. SOPHY moves away to the window]

QUEX [excitedly, to LADY OWBRIDGE]. Oh, my dear aunt!

LADY OWBRIDGE. What ails you, Henry?

QUEX. Muriel! she — she — she's going to marry me!

LADY OWBRIDGE. I hope so.

QUEX. But at the end of the season! a month hence! a month, a month, a month!

LADY OWBRIDGE. My dear boy! Heaven prosper your union! Muriel —

MRS. EDEN. [To LADY OWBRIDGE] Isn't this glorious news, Lady Owbridge? But I always thought it unwise to protract the engagement. You never know what may happen, do you? I must tell the dear Duchess —

[*She joins the DUCHESS and FRAYNE, and chatters to them*]

LADY OWBRIDGE. [*To MURIEL, in a low voice*] Muriel, you are right. In this life, if you have anything to pardon, pardon quickly. Slow forgiveness is little better than no forgiveness.

MRS. EDEN [*coming to QUEX*]. Congratulate you.

QUEX. Thanks.

[*LADY OWBRIDGE moves away, joining the DUCHESS, as MRS. EDEN returns to MURIEL*]

MRS. EDEN [*kissing MURIEL*]. You sensible girl!

[*FRAYNE comes to QUEX*]

FRAYNE. [*To QUEX, mournfully*] Old chap, this is shockingly sudden.

QUEX. Ha, ha!

FRAYNE. However, we must contrive, you and I, to pass one more evening together before the event.

QUEX. One! many!

FRAYNE. No, no, I mean a buster, Harry; a regular night of it —

QUEX. Good lord! go away!

[*MRS. EDEN joins LADY OWBRIDGE as FRAYNE advances to MURIEL*]

FRAYNE [*taking MURIEL's hand*]. Dear young lady, you are about to become the wife of one of the best. There are not many of us left; we are a dwindling band, Miss Eden —

[*The DUCHESS comes to QUEX*]

DUCHESS. [*To QUEX, softly*] Sincere congratulations. [*He bows stiffly*] At any time, you know, when you return to England —

QUEX [*eying her sternly*]. Yes?

DUCHESS. After your honeymoon —

QUEX. Yes?

DUCHESS. Should you feel ennuïé —

QUEX. I!

DUCHESS. The air at Burwarton never failed to exhilarate you. So pray do not forget —

QUEX [*indignantly*]. Duchess!

DUCHESS [*sweetly*]. That poor dear Strood would be pleased to see you. [*FRAYNE joins LADY OWBRIDGE and MRS. EDEN as the DUCHESS advances to MURIEL*] Dear Miss Eden, may your

married life be as beautiful, as as my own!

MURIEL [*frankly*]. Thank you, ess.

LADY OWBRIDGE. We shall have happy party at luncheon. Shall Duchess? Muriel — Henry — joins MURIEL. SOPHY is eying wistfully. MISS LIMBIRD holds tière aside, to allow the visitors to p Good-morning, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY. Good-morning, my la

DUCHESS. Miss Fullgarney —

SOPHY. Good-by, your Grace.

[*The DUCHESS and LADY OWBRIDGE go out*]

FRAYNE [*following them with EDEN*]. Good-day, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY. Good-day, sir.

MRS. EDEN. Morning, Sophy

SOPHY. Morning, Mrs. Eden.

[*FRAYNE and MRS. EDEN follow*]

QUEX [*following them with M*] Good-morning, Miss Fullgarney.

SOPHY [*blankly*]. G—good-morning, my lord. [*QUEX and MURIEL followed by MISS LIMBIRD. SOPHY aghast, her bosom heaving*] Oh! o [*The door-gong sounds. POLLITT at the window. SOPHY is wringing hands*] Oh —!

POLLITT [*entering*]. My love! the matter?

SOPHY. She — she's left me, out a word!

POLLITT. She?

SOPHY. Muriel — without so as wishing me good-morning. [*sob*] Oh! when I've done what I everybody!

[*The portière is pulled aside. MURIEL returns, unaccompanied, and comes to SOPHY side swiftly*]

MURIEL. [*To SOPHY*] Forgive me. You did it for the best. [*Kisses SOPHY*] I'm sorry —

SOPHY [*throwing her arms round MURIEL's neck*] Oh! my darling [*MURIEL runs out. SOPHY goes to window and looks out. POLLITT and drops her head upon her hands restfully*] Ah! that's all right.

[*The door-gong sounds*]

THE END

THE SILVER BOX

(1906)

BY JOHN GALSWORTHY

JOHN GALSWORTHY

JOHN GALSWORTHY is a dramatist with a tremendous sense of life. More than any other English writer of the present generation, he has far-seeing vision, and he is true to humanity. Unlike his contemporaries, he is not alone concerned with the drama, though a thesis interests him. Unlike his contemporaries, Granville Barker most notably, he is not worried about a new literary form. It is the palpable matter that concerns him; it is the life quality that he is after. Galsworthy is a writer of power and of distinction. He is, at the same time, a thinker and an artist. Because he thinks in an orderly fashion, people have judged him, in his mere statement of facts, of being coldly judicial. Yet, always, there is a special arrangement of these facts, which proclaims him to be an artist of selective reticence. After reading "The Eldest Son" (1912) one feels that he is writing in the old manner, not so far removed from the time of Robertson's "The Master Builder", even though the moral question is of the modern order. Compare "The Eldest Son" with Stanley Houghton's "Hindle Wakes" (1912), both treating the same theme, and you will realize the conventionality of Galsworthy. Nevertheless, though he finds it difficult to keep away from class discussion, his symbolism has no conventional limitations. He is a man with prejudices, born of acute observation; and that, it seems, would answer the critics who say that Galsworthy is most aloof in his statement of an argument. He is a man of large conviction, being an artist, primarily interested in the weighing and development of character. For, after all, he does not so far obtrude his convictions as to overshadow what his characters themselves think. This is a characteristic which is not Shawian. Galsworthy could never take English society, as it was before the War, content to paint a realistic picture. He could never have written Barker's "The House of Bernarda Alba", — cleverly pictorial, and minute in its observation, — for the very reason that Galsworthy couples with his observation the spirit of a realist and the heart of a poet. He has glimpses of life far above and beyond England; his dominant attitude is fearless facing of the facts. And there is in him a realization of a power above man — a power which places humanity in proper relationship with the infinite.

As a man lives and thinks [says Galsworthy], so will he write. But it is certain that to the makings of good drama, as to the practise of every other art, there must be brought an almost passionate love of discipline, a white-hot of self-respect, a desire to make the truest, fairest, best thing in one's power; and that to these must be added an eye that does not flinch.

This is measure of Galsworthy, the artist, and of Galsworthy the man. The mere external facts of his life are quickly stated. Born in 1867, at Coombe, near Exeter, he is steeped in the traditions of Devonshire. Those who know him personally say that in his early years he was earnest, sure, and sound. These char-

acteristics have deepened in his work. Some say that he was neither brilliant in school, nor quick in his studies, but that whatever he learned, he learned thoroughly. His plays and his novels lack a certain quality of brilliancy, but they abound in feeling characteristic of him, and they are never devoid of that authority which comes from learning a subject thoroughly, weighing it deeply, and pondering it long. His education was that of any English schoolboy of the day. From 1881 to 1886 he was at Harrow. Then followed three years of reading at New College, Oxford, with the bestowal of an honour degree in law. Between that time and 1890, in the year he was called to the Bar, Galsworthy continued his legal preparation and abetted by his father, who was of the same profession.

Disliking the law, and having money, the son travelled the world over. In his adventures he met, on shipboard, the future novelist, Joseph Conrad, and in time serving his apprenticeship as an ordinary seaman. Between these two men sprang up a firm and lasting friendship, out of which came one of Galsworthy's most significant essays, wherein he has revealed much of his philosophy of life, both in an ironical sense of things.

It was in 1899 that Galsworthy published his first novel, "Jocelyn." As he himself has said, between then and 1904, he "acquired some first-hand knowledge of the conditions of Capital and Labor." Later, these ideas were utilized in "The Habit of Pondering." The habit of pondering over a theme must be characteristic of the mental life of the man. "Justice" was pondered over for two years before it was written. It was in the months of August and September, 1906.

Any man who holds serious ideas concerning art and life, expresses them fully and concretely at some time and in some place. There is not a single page in Galsworthy's novels that does not contain running commentary on the conditions of life, viewing economic and social conditions in relation to types of people who are on the one hand, gained his sympathies, or, on the other hand, excited his antipathies. He is equally as serious regarding his mission as an artist, and on many occasions he has expressed opinions regarding the functions of his profession.

Nowhere is Pinero better reported concerning drama than in his essay on Stevenson. He speaks therein of the feverish toil and mental tension which attend the dramatist's work, in comparison with the work of the novelist. There is no such tension in the work of John Galsworthy. There is a brooding sense which comes with the spiritual tension of thinking. Galsworthy has compassion. His irony has a certain amount of gentleness in its strength, and shows none of the crass sting of Shaw about it. There is a certain terrible meekness about Galsworthy's social criticism, distinctive of his temperament. He is, in his social philosophy, an evolutionist rather than a revolutionist. In his essay on "Some Studies Concerning Drama", contained in his volume, "The Inn of Tranquillity", he has much to say concerning the harmony of the temperament of man, the truthfulness of character and condition, the steadfastness of idea and purpose in dramatic writing. But this essay does not contain as much of the inner fervour of Galsworthy as does his critique on Conrad. Here he is much more concerned with the cosmic spirit than with the irony of things — a philosophy which permeates all his writing.

From first to last, one must say of Galsworthy that he is thoroughly sincere.

Sincerity bars no themes [he writes], it only demands that the dramatic moods and visions should be intense enough to keep him absorbed; that

ld have something to say so engrossing to himself that he has no need
 ray here and there and gather purple plums to eke out what was intended
 an apple tart. Here is the heart of the matter: you cannot get sincere
 na out of those who do not see and feel with sufficient fervour; and you
 not get good, sincere drama out of persons with a weakness for short cuts.
 re are no short cuts to the good in art.

s the fundamental closeness of Galsworthy to the universe that marks him as
 or to his fellow craftsmen in civic worth and influence. In fact, there are
 of Galsworthy's critics who claim that he is too superior a person; that in his
 attitude towards human problems, he often lacks the human quality himself.
 s the ability of seeing life in terms of other people, but he likewise has the abil-
 questioning life in terms of his own relation toward life. Because he awakens
 whatever social conscience we may possess, does not necessarily relieve Gals-
 y of being responsible to his own social conscience. His is not a negative criti-
 n the sense that Matthew Arnold's criticism of life in his poetry is negative.
 as Matthew Arnold questions — "Wouldst thou be as these are, live as
 , and contents himself with the mere challenge without telling us how we
 ive in order to be like the stars, Galsworthy makes his statement, and backs
 with all that social and economic irony characteristic of him.

intent is he in his process of constructive criticism, that his novels are social
 , wherein how the characters think, and what they think, are of more im-
 ce than what the characters actually do, and what they say. This aloofness
 sworthy is exacting, not only on his reading public, but on himself. Note the
 sion of it in one of his prayers, published in his volume of poems:

If on a spring night I went by,
 And God was standing there,
 What is the prayer that I would cry to him?
 This is the prayer:
 "O Lord of Courage grave,
 O Master of this night of spring!
 Make firm in me a heart too brave
 To ask Thee anything."

what sense does Galsworthy's pessimism differ from Arnold's? There
 eternal note of sadness in Arnold's questionings, with no sense of individual
 ibility. There is a persistent note of irony in Galsworthy's questioning,
 an overpowering sense of individual responsibility.

s plays contain essence. They contain atmosphere which arises, not so much
 condition marking the outward picture, as from the condition of the inner life
 se most concerned with the problem. Yet, he is not obscure. At times one
 say he was incomplete. But none of his plays breaks off as incompletely as
 ille Barker's "The Voysey Inheritance", wherein the curtain falls just as we
 to know what the son will do with the fortune he has inherited.

ad John Galsworthy as he would have you read Joseph Conrad. Remember
 ere is a scheme of things much larger, much more important than the scheme
 r's small life, and then some of Galsworthy's palpitant humanity will take its
 proportion. He is always sounding the irony which shows the smallness
 1. Note in "The Freeland's" this bit of nature description:

The fields and hills seemed to mock the scars of road and ditch and fur scraped on them, to mock at barriers of hedge and wall — between the green land and the white sky was conspiracy to disregard those small activities.

It is the fear of seeing ourselves a mere drop in the scheme of the universe produces the irony of things. It is our self-sufficiency which creates human and human barriers. It is necessary, therefore, for us to enlighten ourselves on things pertaining to life, that we may see clearly whither we are tending, and determine what we must aspire to be.

It is in the irony of things that Mr. Galsworthy, as an essayist, as a novelist, and as a dramatist, is groping for an expression of his own religious beliefs. He writes:

I cannot help thinking that historians, looking back from the far future will recall this age as the Third Renaissance. We who are lost in it, worn-out or looking on, can neither tell what we are doing nor where standing; but we cannot help observing that, just as in the Greek Renaissance, worn-out Pagan orthodoxy was penetrated by new philosophy; just as in the Italian Renaissance, Pagan philosophy, reasserting itself, fertilized again an already too bred Christian creed; so now Orthodoxy fertilized by Science is producing a fresh and fuller conception of life — a love of Perfection, not for hope of reward, not for fear of punishment, but for Perfection's sake. . . .

And it [the Western World] began to see that this Perfection, cosmic, was nothing but perfect Equanimity and Harmony; and in human relations, nothing but perfect Love and Justice. And Perfection began to glow before the eyes of the western world like a new star, whose light touched with glory all things as they came forth from Mystery, till to Mystery they were ready to return.

This was written before August, 1914.

The following statement is explanation of what Galsworthy means by the irony of things:

If men were not disharmonic, there would be no irony of things. We are out everywhere, and fail to see how we are jutting out. We seek solutions, we raise our flags, work our arms and legs loyally in the isolated fields that come within our vision, but, having no feeling for the whole, the work we do is departmental. The war of the departments is the game we understand; we spend our lives keeping up the ball and taking down the score. The race of men is a race of partisans feeding their pigeon-holes with contradictory reports of life, and when a fellow comes and lays a summary on the desk, they look at him askance; but the future pays attention, for the impartial is all that it has time for.

Does not this, in a way, show just wherein Galsworthy, educated in the sphere of class distinction, himself ceases to be departmental? There are many who say that when, in 1910, "Justice" appealed so strongly to the Home Secretary, Hon. Winston Churchill, as to reform the English prison system, the dramatist had set forth specifically to reform a particular evil. But we have, from the author's own self, the confession that he aimed even higher:

To present a picture of the general blindness of justice . . . to elucidate true proportions of the problem of Society face to face with the erring individual.

"Strife", both *Roberts* and *Anthony* epitomize class; they each have consummations of character and of purpose; in their different ways they hold out for principles which are as nothing beside the human misery and want they create. Every man sees the irony of things — which once seen might have brought them to a compromise. So deeply ingrained is this ironical feeling for class, that we are inclined to become a little impatient when we find Galsworthy continually using artificial barriers as a contrast — a contrast which was strictly characteristic of him before the War.

"The Silver Box" (1906), in "Strife" (1909), in "Justice" (1910), in "The Eldest Son", in "The Fugitive" (1913), it is class idea against class idea, as perfectly upheld as it is in any of his novels.

He is not rich in varying idea. He is rich in attitude. One is surprised how much there is in the actual framework of a Galsworthy drama to mark it as big. Beneath the surface that Galsworthy's characters live and breathe, and it is this which makes them alive. Even in "The Eldest Son", so thoroughly English in its conventional arrangements and contrast, there is a sense of life, and the *personæ* talk in consonance with their characters.

In handling class, Galsworthy's aim is to show the futility of class in the scheme of things. He paints both sides of the picture. In "The Silver Box", he adopts a simple way of indicating that there is no one civil law for all people, but that there are separate laws for each class, rich and poor. Essentially, Galsworthy is a democrat; he has infinite sympathy for those struggling amidst the limitations of class, and in consequence he has escaped into the free air with a clearer vision. It was this democratic attitude toward life which made him, during 1917, refuse a knighthood among the Birthday Honours of the King.

One can understand Galsworthy who has not first read his poignant prose sketches, contained in "The Motley." Subscribers to the London *Nation* had caught the light in such bits of reality as "A Child", "Comfort", and "Fashion", comedy notes afterwards worked, in larger strokes, into his novels, of which "A Property" — the epic of possession, "The Country House", — a picture of the squire class, "Fraternity" — a record of culture and culture's class divisions, and "The Patrician" — a satire on English aristocracy, are types.

The emotional quality which one detected in "The Dark Flower", and which was to be harbouring a passionate note representing the unhealthy phase of Galsworthy's art, was tempered, in "The Freelanders", by his social interest in the life of the new generation, and it was, to some extent, held in check, in his play, "The Fugitive", by the tragedy of class education, which unfitted his heroine to the life. But in his later novels, a strange element of emotionalism seems to have developed more and more.

Since the outbreak of the War, Galsworthy has been working in the London War Office. He has visited the different Fronts, and has commented on the various social and spiritual phases of the conflict, showing his immense fairness, his ability to discover spiritual currents from the facts before him. There is no doubt that he is bringing to bear on the world's great upheaval that same sense of

the irony of things which has previously dominated his work. For Galsworthy has always been quickly observant and quickly responsive.

It is hard to believe that the man who wrote "Justice" could ever be of over-sentimentalism, yet his reality has always been touched with kindness. In his small detail, one would call him an impartial observer; but, judged as a whole effect, his vision is spiritually large. One never forgets his treatment of the poor child, for instance, with its dull laugh, epitomizing "the laughter in a hundred homes of the myriad unfed"; the slavish father sitting "without the pain of looking at a single thing"; the comfortable people who are like pigeons in the thick of their down, but who, unlike them, "had no wings, — they never soared"; the seeing eyes of fashion passing by "all that is organic in the world; all that is suffering and creating; all that is striving to be free."

In other words, after reading the essays, novels, and plays of Galsworthy one realizes his fairness. He shows his social conscience in everything he writes. His conclusions are often incomplete. Nothing could be more feminine in respect than "Joy" (1907) — a drama in which he did not quite succeed in showing the selfishness of a woman torn between the love of a man and the love of her daughter by her first marriage. "Fraternity" ends almost abruptly — probably a slice of life. But the substance of his fervour is there. No writer could surer way of looking from his character's angle of vision, and of presenting his character's case. This is well seen in "The Pigeon" (1912), which discusses the problem of departmental charity.

"Fraternity" holds in germ nearly all of the characteristics found in Galsworthy's plays. There are parts of "Strife" in it, parts of "The Silver Box"; there are hints of "Justice" and of "The Eldest Son;" and, as far as the mental attitude toward the poor is concerned, as manifest in sentimentalism, it foreshadows "The Pigeon." Situations repeat themselves in Galsworthy's plays and novels. This is not so much due to a lack of imagination or originality as to an intensity of purpose resulting in the adoption of symbols to represent typical conditions. It is Galsworthy's mannerism.

"The Pigeon" shows the author in a newer and softer light than one finds in "The Silver Box", "Strife", or "Justice." It marks him as a little Barometer, and we must remember that "Fraternity" was dedicated to the creator of the Pan. In "The Pigeon" there is poignant truth, clear characterization, and a warning. We find in it a diatribe against departmental evaluations. Here Justice goes its machine-made way, and sentiment is pitted against a theoretical solution of poverty.

The poetical quality is uppermost in Galsworthy's nature. Refreshing springs up between stern realities. The lyricism in his novels is better than the allegory in "The Little Dream", a delicate fantasy of a longing soul which seeks for life's true measure and meaning. His poetry flashes red in the grey of life, like an autumn leaf amidst dying things; or else it comes out of an active soul, as sap flows through the veins of life in struggle. His style flows with vitality, as sap flows through the veins of living things. There are inevitable expressions in his work; he squeezes the essence of existence out of the matter with which he deals.

He is essentially alive on all topics, and he is in the current of social change. His deep-seated social sense, and with his sense of art so clearly defined, before the outbreak of the War, one of the most deservedly prominent figures in the "New Drama" of England.

What Galsworthy does, though it may seem to be prompted entirely by fervour, nearly always starts from an interesting character. Discussing "Justice" at one time, he wrote:

My play . . . was regarded by many people as a deliberate plan to deal with the problem of capital and labour. That was not the case. They were types of men that I had observed. Both were over strong-willed, and when they met there was necessarily violence. It happened that in the case I served, these types represented capital and labour. The play might just as well have been political.

"The Silver Box" is selected for the present volume as representing technically his best constructed pieces. "Justice" is not as firmly wrought. The sheer honesty and fairness of "Justice" are its dominant characteristics. In "The Silver Box" Galsworthy seems to have struck the very key-note of his sympathy with life. Its irony is clearly defined in its definite class distinctions.

THE SILVER BOX
A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By JOHN GALSWORTHY

COPYRIGHT, 1909,
By JOHN GALSWORTHY
Reprinted by permission of the Author, Mr. John Galsworthy, and the publishers,
Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York,

CASTS OF CHARACTERS

Court Theatre, London, September 25, 1906. *Empire Theatre, New Season of 1906.*

JOHN BARTHWICK, M.P., a wealthy Liberal	Mr. James Hearn	Mr. Eugene Jep
MRS. BARTHWICK, his wife .	Miss Frances Ivor	Miss Hattie Ru
JACK BARTHWICK, their son .	Mr. A. E. Matthews	Mr. Harrie Red
ROPER, their solicitor . . .	Mr. A. Goodsall	Mr. William Sar
MRS. JONES, their charwoman	Miss Irene Rooke	Miss Ethel Barr
MARLOW, their manservant .	Mr. Frederick Lloyd	Mr. William Ev
WHEELER, their maidservant .	Miss Gertrude Henriques	Miss Anita Roth
JONES, the stranger within their gates	Mr. Norman McKinnel	Mr. Bruce McR
MRS. SEDDON, a landlady . .	Mrs. Charles Maltby	Miss Fanny L. I
SNOW, a detective	Mr. Trevor Lowe	Mr. James Kear
JULIUS HOLDEN, a Police Magistrate.	Mr. Athol Forde	Mr. Forrest Rob
AN UNKNOWN LADY, from be- yond	Miss Sydney Fairbrother	Miss Mary Nash
TWO LITTLE GIRLS, homeless	—	{ Miss Dorothy S { Miss Helen Mod
LIVENS, their father	Mr. Edmund Gurney	Mr. Soldene Pov
RELIEVING OFFICER.	Mr. Edmund Gwenn	Mr. M. B. Pollo
MAGISTRATE'S CLERK	Mr. Lewis Casson	
USHER	Mr. Norman Page	
CLERK OF COURT	—	Mr. Louis Eagar
SWEARING CLERK	—	Mr. John Adolphi
CONSTABLE	—	Mr. Harry Bark

Policemen, Clerks, and others

TIME : *The present. The action of the first two Acts takes place on Easter Tuesday, the action of the third on Easter Wednesday week.*

ACT I

SCENE I. ROCKINGHAM GATE. JOHN BARTHWICK'S DINING-ROOM.

SCENE II. THE SAME.

SCENE III. THE SAME.

ACT II

SCENE I. THE JONES'S LODGINGS, MERTHYR STREET.

SCENE II. JOHN BARTHWICK'S DINING-ROOM.

ACT III

A LONDON POLICE COURT.

THE SILVER BOX

ACT I

FIRST. — *The curtain rises on the BARTHWICKS' dining-room, large, modern, and well furnished; the window curtains drawn. Electric light is burning. On the large round dining-table is set out a tray with whisky, a syphon, and a silver cigarette-box. It is past midnight.*

Fumbling is heard outside the door. The door is opened suddenly; JACK BARTHWICK seems to fall into the room. He stands holding by the door knob, leaning forward him, with a beatific smile. He is in evening dress and wears a hat, and carries in his hand a blue velvet lady's reticule. His rosy face is freshly coloured and well-shaven. An overcoat is hanging on his arm]

— Hello! I've got home all right. [Defiantly] Who says I sh'd never have opened th' door without 'sistance? [He staggers in, fumbling with the reticule. A lady's handkerchief and a crimson silk fall out] Serve her right! — everything droppin' off th' cat. I've scored her off — at her bag. [He swings the reticule. Serves her joll' well right. [He takes a cigarette out of the silver box and puts it in his mouth] Never gave th' cat anything! [He hunts through all the pockets and pulls a shilling out; it rattles and rolls away. He looks for it] No shilling! [He looks again] No gratitude! Absolutely nothing. [Laughs] Mus' tell him I've got only nothing.

He lurches through the door and down a corridor, and presently returns, followed by JONES, who is advanced in liquor. JONES, about thirty years of age, has hollow cheeks, black circles round his eyes, and rusty clothes. He

looks as though he might be unemployed, and enters in a hang-dog manner]

JACK. Sh! sh! sh! Don't you make a noise, whatever you do. Shu' the door, an' have a drink. [Very solemnly] You helped me to open the door — I've got nothin' for you. This is my house. My father's name's Barthwick; he's Member of Parliament — Liberal Member of Parliament: I've told you that before. Have a drink! [He pours out whisky and drinks it up] I'm not drunk — [Subsiding on a sofa] Tha's all right. What's your name? My name's Barthwick, so's my father's; I'm a Liberal too — wha're you?

JONES [in a thick, sardonic voice]. I'm a bloomin' Conservative. My name's Jones! My wife works 'ere; she's the char; she works 'ere.

JACK. Jones? [He laughs] There's 'nother Jones at College with me. I'm not a Socialist myself; I'm a Liberal — there's ve-lill difference, because of the principles of the Lib—Liberal Party. We're all equal before the law — tha's rot, tha's silly. [Laughs] What was I about to say? Give me some whisky.

[JONES gives him the whisky he desires, together with a squirt of syphon]

What I was goin' tell you was — I've had a row with her. [He waves the reticule] Have a drink, Jones — sh'd never have got in without you — tha's why I'm giving you a drink. Don' care who knows I've scored her off. Th' cat! [He throws his feet up on the sofa] Don' you make a noise, whatever you do. You pour out a drink — you make yourself good long, long drink — you take a cigarette — you take anything you like. Sh'd never have got in without you. [Closing his eyes] You're a Tory — you're a Tory Socialist. I'm Liberal

myself — have a drink — I'm an excel'nt chap.

[*His head drops back. He, smiling, falls asleep, and JONES stands looking at him; then, snatching up JACK'S glass, he drinks it off. He picks the reticule from off JACK'S shirt-front, holds it to the light, and smells at it*]

JONES. Been on the tiles and brought 'ome some of yer cat's fur.

[*He stuffs it into JACK'S breast pocket*]

JACK [*murmuring*]. I've scored you off! You cat!

[JONES looks around him fur-tively; he pours out whisky and drinks it. From the silver box he takes a cigarette, puffs at it, and drinks more whisky. *There is no sobriety left in him*]

JONES. Fat lot o' things they've got 'ere! [*He sees the crimson purse lying on the floor*] More cat's fur. Puss, puss! [*He fingers it, drops it on the tray, and looks at JACK*] Calf! Fat calf! [*He sees his own presentment in a mirror. Lifting his hands, with fingers spread, he stares at it; then looks again at JACK, clenching his fist as if to batter in his sleeping, smiling face. Suddenly he tilts the rest of the whisky into the glass and drinks it. With cunning glee he takes the silver box and purse and pockets them*] I'll score you off too, that's wot I'll do!

[*He gives a little snarling laugh and lurches to the door. His shoulder rubs against the switch; the light goes out. There is a sound as of a closing outer door*]

[*The curtain falls*]

[*The curtain rises again at once*]

SCENE SECOND. — *In the BARTHWICKS' dining-room. JACK is still asleep; the morning light is coming through the curtains. The time is half-past eight. WHEELER, brisk person, enters with a dust-pan, and MRS. JONES more slowly with a scuttle.*

WHEELER [*drawing the curtains*]. That precious husband of yours was round for you after you'd gone yesterday, Mrs. Jones. Wanted your money for drink, I suppose. He hangs about

the corner here half the time. him outside the "Goat and when I went to the post last night I were you I wouldn't live with I wouldn't live with a man that his hand to me. I wouldn't with it. Why don't you take children and leave him? If up with 'im it'll only make him I never can see why, because a married you, he should knock you

MRS. JONES. [*Slim, dark-eyed, dark-haired; oval-faced, and smooth, soft, even voice; her patient, her way of talking quite personal; she wears a blue linen and boots with holes*] It was near last night before he come home, wasn't himself. He made me and he knocked me about; he seem to know what he was say doing. Of course I would leave but I'm really afraid of what he to me. He's such a violent man he's not himself.

WHEELER. Why don't you get locked up? You'll never have peace until you get him locked up. I were you I'd go to the police to-morrow. That's what I would.

MRS. JONES. Of course I would go, because he does treat me so when he's not himself. But y Bettina, he has a very hard time been out of work two months, preys upon his mind. When work he behaves himself much. It's when he's out of work that violent.

WHEELER. Well, if you won't take any steps you'll never get rid of him.

MRS. JONES. Of course it's wearing to me; I don't get my sleep nights. And it's not as if I were helped from him, because I have to take the children and all of us. And he throws such dreadful things up at me, talks of my having men to follow about. Such a thing never happens. No man ever speaks to me. Of course it's just the other way, what he does that's wrong and makes me so unhappy. And then he's threatenin' to cut my throat if I don't leave him. It's all the drink, and preying on his mind; he's not a man really. Sometimes he'll be quite kind to me, but I've got to get much from him, I don't feel it in my heart to speak kind back, but just keep my tongue to myself. And he's all right with

too, except when he's not him-

ELER. You mean when he's the beauty.

JONES. Yes. *[Without change]* There's the young gentleman on the sofa.

[They both look silently at JACK]

JONES *[at last, in her soft voice]*. Isn't look quite himself.

ELER. He's a young limb, that's is. It's my belief he was tipsy right, like your husband. It's a kind of bein' out of work that he to drink. I'll go and tell Marlow this is his job. *[She goes]*

MRS. JONES, *upon her knees, begins a gentle sweeping* *[waking]*. Who's there? What

JONES. It's me, sir, Mrs. Jones. *[sitting up and looking round]*. Is it — what — what time is it?

JONES. It's getting on for clock, sir.

. For nine! Why — what! *and loosening his tongue; put- and to his head, and staring hard*

JONES] Look here, you, Mrs.

Jones — don't you say you ne asleep here.

JONES. No, sir, of course I sir.

k. It's quite an accident; I now how it happened. I must forgotten to go to bed. It's a thing. I've got a most beastly ne. Mind you don't say any-Mrs. Jones.

Goes out and passes MARLOW in the doorway. MARLOW is young and quiet; he is clean-shaven, and his hair is brushed high from his forehead in a coxcomb. Incidentally a butler, he is first a man. He looks at MRS. JONES, and smiles a private smile]

low. Not the first time, and e the last. Looked a bit dicky, a. Jones?

JONES. He didn't look quite . Of course I didn't take notice.

low. You're used to them. your old man?

JONES *[softly as throughout]*. e was very bad last night; he seem to know what he was about. s very late, and he was most . But now, of course, he's

MARLOW. That's his way of find- ing a job, eh?

MRS. JONES. As a rule, Mr. Marlow, he goes out early every morning looking for work, and sometimes he comes in fit to drop — and of course I can't say he doesn't try to get it, because he does. Trade's very bad. *[She stands quite still, her pan and brush before her, at the beginning and the end of long vistas of experience, traversing them with her impersonal eye]* But he's not a good husband to me — last night he hit me, and he was so dreadfully abusive.

MARLOW. Bank 'oliday, eh! He's too fond of the "Goat and Bells," that's what's the matter with him. I see him at the corner late every night. He hangs about.

MRS. JONES. He gets to feeling very low walking about all day after work, and being refused so often, and then when he gets a drop in him it goes to his head. But he shouldn't treat his wife as he treats me. Sometimes I've had to go and walk about at night, when he wouldn't let me stay in the room; but he's sorry for it afterwards. And he hangs about after me, he waits for me in the street; and I don't think he ought to, because I've always been a good wife to him. And I tell him Mrs. Barthwick wouldn't like him coming about the place. But that only makes him angry, and he says dreadful things about the gentry. Of course it was through me that he first lost his place, through his not treating me right; and that's made him bitter against the gentry. He had a very good place as groom in the country; but it made such a stir, because of course he didn't treat me right.

MARLOW. Got the sack?

MRS. JONES. Yes; his employer said he couldn't keep him, because there was a great deal of talk; and he said it was such a bad example. But it's very important for me to keep my work here; I have the three children, and I don't want him to come about after me in the streets, and make a disturbance as he sometimes does.

MARLOW *[holding up the empty decanter]*. Not a drain! Next time he hits you get a witness and go down to the court —

MRS. JONES. Yes, I think I've made up my mind. I think I ought to.

MARLOW. That's right. Where's the ciga—?

[He searches for the silver box; he looks at MRS. JONES, who is sweeping on her hands and knees; he checks himself and stands reflecting. From the tray he picks two half-smoked cigarettes, and reads the name on them]

Nestor — where the deuce —?

[With a meditative air he looks again at MRS. JONES, and, taking up JACK'S overcoat, he searches in the pockets. WHEELER, with a tray of breakfast things, comes in]

MARLOW. [Aside to WHEELER] Have you seen the cigarette-box?

WHEELER. No.

MARLOW. Well, it's gone. I put it on the tray last night. And he's been smoking. [Showing her the ends of cigarettes] It's not in these pockets. He can't have taken it upstairs this morning! Have a good look in his room when he comes down. Who's been in here?

WHEELER. Only me and Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES. I've finished here; shall I do the drawing-room now?

WHEELER [looking at her doubtfully]. Have you seen — Better do the boudwower first.

[MRS. JONES goes out with pan and brush. MARLOW and

WHEELER look each other in the face]

MARLOW. It'll turn up.

WHEELER [hesitatingly]. You don't think she — [Nodding at the door]

MARLOW [stoutly]. I don't — I never believes anything of anybody.

WHEELER. But the master'll have to be told.

MARLOW. You wait a bit, and see if it don't turn up. Suspicion's no business of ours. I set my mind against it.

[The curtain falls]

[The curtain rises again at once]

SCENE THIRD. — BARTHWICK and MRS.

BARTHWICK are seated at the breakfast table. He is a man between fifty and sixty; quietly important, with a bald forehead, and pince-nez, and the "Times" in his hand. She is a lady of nearly fifty, well dressed, with greyish hair, good features, and

a decided manner. They face each other.

BARTHWICK [from behind his back]. The Labour man has got in at the election for Barnside, my dear.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Another Liberal! I can't think what on earth the result is about.

BARTHWICK. I predicted it. It's not a matter of vast importance.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Not? Heedless of you take it so calmly, John? It's simply outrageous. And then you sit, you Liberals, and pretend to care for these people!

BARTHWICK [frowning]. The representation of all parties is necessary for any proper reform, for any proper social policy.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I've no patience with your talk of reform — a mere nonsense about social policy. What is perfectly well what it is they want things for themselves. Socialists and Labour men are a completely selfish set of people. They have no sense of patriotism, like the upper classes; they simply want what we've got.

BARTHWICK. Want what we've got? [He stares into space] My dear, are you talking about? [With a sigh] I'm no alarmist.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Cream? You uneducated men! Wait until they begin to tax our investment. You're convinced that when they once have the chance they will tax everybody. They've no feeling for the common people. You Liberals and Conservatives, all alike; you don't see an inch of your noses. You've no imagination. You're not a scrap of imagination between you. You ought to join hands and make the most of the bud.

BARTHWICK. You're talking nonsense! How is it possible for Liberals and Conservatives to join hands? You call it? That shows how little you know. It is for women — Why, the essence of a Liberal is to trust the people!

MRS. BARTHWICK. Now, John, finish your breakfast. As if there were any real difference between you and the Conservatives. All the upper classes have the same interests to protect, the same principles. [Calmly] You're sitting upon a volcano, John.

BARTHWICK. What!

BARTHWICK. I read a letter paper yesterday. I forget the name, but it made the whole perfectly clear. You don't look in the face.

BARTHWICK. Indeed! *[Heavily]* I Liberal! Drop the subject,

BARTHWICK. Toast? I quite with what this man says: Educating simply ruining the lower classes. Ruins them, and that's the worst for us all. I see an enormous error in the manner of servants.

BARTHWICK *[with suspicious emphasis]* I welcome any change that will do something better. *[He opens a letter]* H'm! This is that affair of Jack's again. "High Street, Sir, We have received Mr. Barthwick, Senior's, draft for forty pounds!" Oh! the letter's to "We now enclose the cheque enclosed with us, which, as we stated in our previous letter, was not met on presentation at your bank. We are, Sir, obediently, Moss and Sons," H'm! *[Staring at the cheque]* What business altogether! The boy has been prosecuted.

BARTHWICK. Come, John, you and Jack didn't mean anything; he thought he was overdrawing. I think his bank ought to have cashed the cheque. They must know your

BARTHWICK *[replacing in the envelope the letter and the cheque]*. Much good that could have done him in a court

He stops as JACK comes in, fastening his waistcoat and staunching a razor cut upon his chin

[sitting down between them, and talking with an artificial joviality]. I'm late. *[He looks lugubriously at the dishes]* Tea, please, mother. What's for me? *[BARTHWICK hands the letter to him]* But look here, I say, the letter's been opened! I do wish you wouldn't —

BARTHWICK *[touching the envelope]*. I don't I'm entitled to this name.

[sulkily]. Well, I can't help you with your name, father! *[He reads the letter, and mutters]* Brutes!

BARTHWICK *[eying him]*. You don't know to be so well out of that.

Haven't you ragged me enough, dad?

MRS. BARTHWICK. Yes, John, let Jack have his breakfast.

BARTHWICK. If you hadn't had me to come to, where would you have been? It's the merest accident — suppose you had been the son of a poor man or a clerk? Obtaining money with a cheque you knew your bank could not meet. It might have ruined you for life. I can't see what's to become of you if these are your principles. I never did anything of the sort myself.

JACK. I expect you always had lots of money. If you've got plenty of money, of course —

BARTHWICK. On the contrary, I had not your advantages. My father kept me very short of money.

JACK. How much had you, dad?

BARTHWICK. It's not material. The question is, do you feel the gravity of what you did?

JACK. I don't know about the gravity. Of course, I'm very sorry if you think it was wrong. Haven't I said so! I should never have done it at all if I hadn't been so jolly hard up.

BARTHWICK. How much of that forty pounds have you got left, Jack?

JACK *[hesitating]*. I don't know — not much.

BARTHWICK. How much?

JACK *[desperately]*. I haven't got any.

BARTHWICK. What?

JACK. I know I've got the most beastly headache.

[He leans his head on his hand]

MRS. BARTHWICK. Headache? My dear boy! Can't you eat any breakfast?

JACK *[drawing in his breath]*. Too jolly bad!

MRS. BARTHWICK. I'm so sorry. Come with me, dear; I'll give you something that will take it away at once.

[They leave the room; and BARTHWICK, tearing up the letter, goes to the fireplace and puts the pieces in the fire. While he is doing this MARLOW comes in, and looking round him, is about quietly to withdraw]

BARTHWICK. What's that? What d'you want?

MARLOW. I was looking for Mr. John, sir.

BARTHWICK. What d'you want Mr. John for?

MARLOW *[with hesitation]*. I thought I should find him here, sir.

BARTHWICK [*suspiciously*]. Yes, but what do you want him for?

MARLOW [*offhandedly*]. There's a lady called — asked to speak to him for a minute, sir.

BARTHWICK. A lady, at this time in the morning. What sort of a lady?

MARLOW [*without expression in his voice*]. I can't tell, sir; no particular sort. She might be after charity. She might be a Sister of Mercy, I should think, sir.

BARTHWICK. Is she dressed like one?

MARLOW. No, sir, she's in plain clothes, sir.

BARTHWICK. Didn't she say what she wanted?

MARLOW. No, sir.

BARTHWICK. Where did you leave her?

MARLOW. In the hall, sir.

BARTHWICK. In the hall? How do you know she's not a thief — not got designs on the house?

MARLOW. No, sir, I don't fancy so, sir.

BARTHWICK. Well, show her in here; I'll see her myself.

[MARLOW goes out with a private gesture of dismay. He soon returns, ushering in a young pale lady with dark eyes and pretty figure, in a modish, black, but rather shabby dress, a black and white trimmed hat with a bunch of Parma violets wrongly placed, and fuzzy-spotted veil. At the sight of Mr. BARTHWICK she exhibits every sign of nervousness. MARLOW goes out]

UNKNOWN LADY. Oh! but — I beg pardon — there's some mistake — I —

[*She turns to fly*]

BARTHWICK. Whom did you want to see, madam?

UNKNOWN [*stopping and looking back*]. It was Mr. John Barthwick I wanted to see.

BARTHWICK. I am John Barthwick, madam. What can I have the pleasure of doing for you?

UNKNOWN. Oh! I — I don't —

[*She drops her eyes. BARTHWICK scrutinizes her, and purses his lips*]

BARTHWICK. It was my son, perhaps, you wished to see?

UNKNOWN [*quickly*]. Yes, of course, it's your son.

BARTHWICK. May I ask whom I have the pleasure of speaking to?

UNKNOWN [*appeal and hardening her face*]. My name is — oh! it matters — I don't want to make a fuss. I just want to see your son in a minute. [*Boldly*] In fact, I want him.

BARTHWICK [*controlling his nerves*]. My son is not very necessary, no doubt I could do without the matter; be so kind as to tell me how you know —

UNKNOWN. Oh! but I want to see him — I've come on purpose — [*bursts out nervously*] I don't want to make any fuss, but the fact is last night your son took away my money —

BARTHWICK [*severely*]. Yes, what?

UNKNOWN. He took away my reticule.

BARTHWICK. Your reticule —?

UNKNOWN. I don't care about my reticule; it's not that I want my money back — mustn't you see I don't want to make any fuss [*her face is quivering*] — but — but my money was in it!

BARTHWICK. In what — in your reticule?

UNKNOWN. In my purse, my reticule. It was a crimson silk purse. Really, I wouldn't have come — I don't want to make any fuss. But get my money back — mustn't you see?

BARTHWICK. Do you tell me your son —?

UNKNOWN. Oh! well, you know he wasn't quite — I mean he was —

[*She smiles mesmically*]

BARTHWICK. I beg your pardon.

UNKNOWN [*stamping her foot*]. I don't you see — tipsy! We quarrel.

BARTHWICK [*scandalised*]. Where?

UNKNOWN [*defiantly*]. At my house. We'd had supper at the — at my son's —

BARTHWICK [*pressing the bell*]. I'll ask how you knew this house. I'll ask he give you his name and address.

UNKNOWN [*glancing sidelong*]. I'll get it out of his overcoat.

BARTHWICK [*sardonically*]. I'll get it out of his overcoat. And ask if my son will know you by name or light?

UNKNOWN. Know me? I'll tell you jolly — I mean, of course he will know me.

[MARLOW enters]

BARTHWICK. Ask Mr. John Barthwick down.

MARLOW goes out, and BARTHWICK walks uneasily about]
 How long have you enjoyed his
 stanceship?

UNKNOWN. Only since — only since
 Friday.

BARTHWICK. I am at a loss — I re-
 am at a loss —

*He glances at this unknown lady,
 who stands with eyes cast down,
 twisting her hands. And sud-
 denly JACK appears. He stops
 on seeing who is here, and the
 unknown lady hysterically gig-
 gles. There is a silence]*

BARTHWICK [portentously]. This
 — er — lady says that last night
 nk you said last night, madam,
 took away —

UNKNOWN [impulsively]. My reti-
 d all my money was in a crimson
 se.

Reticule. [Looking round for
 g to get away] I don't know
 g about it.

BARTHWICK [sharply]. Come, do you
 eing this young lady last night?

UNKNOWN. Dony? No, of course. [Whis-
 Why did you give me away like
 That on earth did you come here

UNKNOWN [tearfully]. I'm sure I
 want to — it's not likely, is it?
 atched it out of my hand — you
 ou did — and the purse had all
 ncy in it. I didn't follow you
 at because I didn't want to make
 nd it was so late, and you were

BARTHWICK. Come, sir, don't turn
 ck on me — explain!

UNKNOWN [desperately]. I don't remem-
 thing about it. [In a low voice
 friend! Why on earth couldn't
 ve written?

UNKNOWN [sullenly]. I want it now;
 have it — I've got to pay my
 day. [She looks at BARTHWICK]
 only too glad to jump on people
 s not — not well off.

UNKNOWN. I don't remember anything
 , really. I don't remember any-
 bout last night at all. [He puts
 d up to his head] It's all
 and I've got such a beastly
 ne.

UNKNOWN. But you took it; you
 ou did. You said you'd score

UNKNOWN. Well, then, it must be here.
 nber now — I remember some-

thing. Why did I take the beastly
 thing?

BARTHWICK. Yes, why did you take
 the beastly —

[He turns abruptly to the window]

UNKNOWN [with her mesmeric smile].
 You weren't quite — were you?

JACK [smiling pallidly]. I'm awfully
 sorry. If there's anything I can do —

BARTHWICK. Do? You can restore
 this property, I suppose.

JACK. I'll go and have a look, but
 I really don't think I've got it.

[He goes out hurriedly. And
 BARTHWICK, placing a chair,
 motions to the visitor to sit;
 then, with pursed lips, he
 stands and eyes her fixedly.
 She sits, and steals a look at
 him; then turns away, and,
 drawing up her veil, stealthily
 wipes her eyes. And JACK
 comes back]

JACK [ruefully holding out the empty
 reticule]. Is that the thing? I've
 looked all over — I can't find the purse
 anywhere. Are you sure it was there?

UNKNOWN [tearfully]. Sure? Of
 course I'm sure. A crimson silk purse.
 It was all the money I had.

JACK. I really am awfully sorry
 my head's so jolly bad. I've asked the
 butler, but he hasn't seen it.

UNKNOWN. I must have my
 money —

JACK. Oh! Of course — that'll be
 all right; I'll see that that's all right.
 How much?

UNKNOWN [sullenly]. Seven pounds
 — twelve — it's all I've got in the
 world.

JACK. That'll be all right; I'll
 send you a — cheque.

UNKNOWN [eagerly]. No; now,
 please. Give me what was in my purse;
 I've got to pay my rent this morning.
 They won't give me another day; I'm
 a fortnight behind already.

JACK [blankly]. I'm awfully sorry;
 I really haven't a penny in my pocket.

[He glances stealthily at BARTHWICK]

UNKNOWN [excitedly]. Come, I say
 you must — it's my money, and you
 took it. I'm not going away without
 it. They'll turn me out of my place.

JACK [clasping his head]. But I can't
 give you what I haven't got. Don't I
 tell you I haven't a beastly cent?

UNKNOWN [tearing at her handker-
 chief]. Oh! do give it me! [She puts

her hands together in appeal; then, with sudden fierceness] If you don't I'll summons you. It's stealing, that's what it is!

BARTHWICK [*uneasily*]. One moment, please. As a matter of — er — principle, I shall settle this claim. [*He produces money*] Here is eight pounds; the extra will cover the value of the purse and your cab fares. I need make no comment — no thanks are necessary.

[*Touching the bell, he holds the door ajar in silence. The unknown lady stores the money in her reticule, she looks from JACK to BARTHWICK, and her face is quivering faintly with a smile. She hides it with her hand, and steals away. Behind her BARTHWICK shuts the door*]

BARTHWICK [*with solemnity*]. H'm! This is a nice thing to happen!

JACK [*impersonally*]. What awful luck!

BARTHWICK. So this is the way that forty pounds has gone! One thing after another! Once more I should like to know where you'd have been if it hadn't been for me! You don't seem to have any principles. You — you're one of those who are a nuisance to society; you — you're dangerous! What your mother would say I don't know. Your conduct, as far as I can see, is absolutely unjustifiable. It's — it's criminal. Why, a poor man who behaved as you've done . . . d'you think he'd have any mercy shown him? What you want is a good lesson. You and your sort are — [*he speaks with feeling*] — a nuisance to the community. Don't ask me to help you next time. You're not fit to be helped.

JACK [*turning upon his sire, with unexpected fierceness*]. All right, I won't then, and see how you like it. You wouldn't have helped me this time, I know, if you hadn't been scared the thing would get into the papers. Where are the cigarettes?

BARTHWICK [*regarding him uneasily*]. Well — I'll say no more about it. [*He rings the bell*] I'll pass it over for this once, but — [MARLOW comes in] You can clear away.

[*He hides his face behind the "Times"*]

JACK [*brightening*]. I say, Marlow, where are the cigarettes?

MARLOW. I put the box out with

the whisky last night, sir, but this I can't find it anywhere.

JACK. Did you look in my room?

MARLOW. Yes, sir; I've looked over the house. I found two ends in the tray this morning, must have been smokin' last night [*Hesitating*] I'm really afraid one's purloined the box.

JACK [*uneasily*]. Stolen it!

BARTHWICK. What's that? cigarette-box! Is anything else missing?

MARLOW. No, sir; I've been through the plate.

BARTHWICK. Was the house open this morning? None of the windows open?

MARLOW. No, sir. [*Quietly*] Yes, you left your latch-key in the door last night, sir.

[*He hands it back, uneasily*]
BARTHWICK]

JACK. Tst!

BARTHWICK. Who's been in the room this morning?

MARLOW. Me and Wheeler. Mrs. Jones is all, sir, as far as I know.

BARTHWICK. Have you asked Mrs. Jones? [*To JACK*] Go and ask your mother if she's had it; ask her to look and see if she's missed anything else. [*JACK goes upon this errand*] Nothing is more disquieting than things like this.

MARLOW. No, sir.

BARTHWICK. Have you any suspicions?

MARLOW. No, sir.

BARTHWICK. This Mrs. Jones, how long has she been working here?

MARLOW. Only this last month.

BARTHWICK. What sort of person is she?

MARLOW. I don't know much of her, sir; seems a very quiet, respectable woman.

BARTHWICK. Who did the work in the room this morning?

MARLOW. Wheeler and Mrs. Jones, sir.

BARTHWICK [*with his forefinger raised*]. Now, was this Mrs. Jones in the room alone at any time?

MARLOW [*expressionless*]. Yes, sir.

BARTHWICK. How do you know that?

MARLOW [*reluctantly*]. I found her here, sir.

BARTHWICK. And has Wheeler been in the room alone?

MARLOW. No, sir, she's not.

ld say, sir, that Mrs. Jones seems honest —

THWICK [*holding up his hand*]. t to know this: Has this Mrs. been here the whole morning?

LOW. Yes, sir — no, sir — she d over to the greengrocer's for

THWICK. H'm! Is she in the now?

LOW. Yes, sir.

THWICK. Very good. I shall a point of clearing this up. On le I shall make a point of fixing ponsibility; it goes to the founda- of security. In all your in- s —

LOW. Yes, sir.

THWICK. What sort of circum- s is this Mrs. Jones in? Is her nd in work?

LOW. I believe not, sir.

THWICK. Very well. Say noth- out it to any one. Tell Wheeler speak of it, and ask Mrs. Jones o up here.

LOW. Very good, sir.

[*MARLOW goes out, his face concerned; and BARTHWICK stays, his face judicial and a little pleased, as befits a man conducting an inquiry. MRS. BARTHWICK and her son come in*]

THWICK. Well, my dear, you've en it, I suppose?

s. BARTHWICK. No. But what raordinary thing, John! Marlow, rse, is out of the question. I'm a none of the maids — as for

THWICK. Oh, cook!

s. BARTHWICK. Of course! It's tly detestable to me to suspect dy.

THWICK. It is not a question of feelings. It's a question of jus- On principle —

s. BARTHWICK. I shouldn't be a rprised if the charwoman knew hing about it. It was Laura who mended her.

THWICK [*judicially*]. I am going ve Mrs. Jones up. Leave it to and — er — remember that no- is guilty until they're proved so. be careful. I have no intention ghtening her; I shall give her chance. I hear she's in poor cir- ances. If we are not able to do for them we are bound to have

the greatest sympathy with the poor. [MRS. JONES comes in] [*Pleasantly*] Oh! good morning, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES [*soft, and even, unemphatic*]. Good morning, sir! Good morning, ma'am!

BARTHWICK. About your husband — he's not in work, I hear?

MRS. JONES. No, sir; of course he's not in work just now.

BARTHWICK. Then I suppose he's earning nothing.

MRS. JONES. No, sir, he's not earn- ing anything just now, sir.

BARTHWICK. And how many children have you?

MRS. JONES. Three children; but of course they don't eat very much, sir.

[*A little silence*]

BARTHWICK. And how old is the eldest?

MRS. JONES. Nine years old, sir.

BARTHWICK. Do they go to school?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, they all three go to school every day.

BARTHWICK [*severely*]. And what about their food when you're out at work?

MRS. JONES. Well, sir, I have to give them their dinner to take with them. Of course I'm not always able to give them anything; sometimes I have to send them without; but my husband is very good about the chil- dren when he's in work. But when he's not in work of course he's a very difficult man.

BARTHWICK. He drinks, I suppose?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir. Of course I can't say he doesn't drink, because he does.

BARTHWICK. And I suppose he takes all your money?

MRS. JONES. No, sir, he's very good about my money, except when he's not himself, and then, of course, he treats me very badly.

BARTHWICK. Now what is he — your husband?

MRS. JONES. By profession, sir, of course he's a groom.

BARTHWICK. A groom! How came he to lose his place?

MRS. JONES. He lost his place a long time ago, sir, and he's never had a very long job since; and now, of course, the motor-cars are against him.

BARTHWICK. When were you mar- ried to him, Mrs. Jones?

MRS. JONES. Eight years ago, sir — that was in —

MRS. BARTHWICK [*sharply*]. Eight? You said the eldest child was nine.

MRS. JONES. Yes, ma'am; of course that was why he lost his place. He didn't treat me rightly, and of course his employer said he couldn't keep him because of the example.

BARTHWICK. You mean he — ahem —

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir; and of course after he lost his place he married me.

MRS. BARTHWICK. You actually mean to say you — you were —

BARTHWICK. My dear —

MRS. BARTHWICK [*indignantly*]. How disgraceful!

BARTHWICK [*hurriedly*]. And where are you living now, Mrs. Jones?

MRS. JONES. We've not got a home, sir. Of course we've been obliged to put away most of our things.

BARTHWICK. Put your things away! You mean to — to — er — to pawn them?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, to put them away. We're living in Merthyr Street — that is close by here, sir — at No. 34. We just have the one room.

BARTHWICK. And what do you pay a week?

MRS. JONES. We pay six shillings a week, sir, for a furnished room.

BARTHWICK. And I suppose you're behind in the rent?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, we're a little behind in the rent.

BARTHWICK. But *you're* in good work, aren't you?

MRS. JONES. Well, sir, I have a day in Stamford Place Thursdays. And Mondays and Wednesdays and Fridays I come here. But to-day, of course, is a half-day, because of yesterday's Bank Holiday.

BARTHWICK. I see; four days a week, and you get half a crown a day, is that it?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, and my dinner; but sometimes it's only half a day, and that's eighteenpence.

BARTHWICK. And when your husband earns anything he spends it in drink, I suppose?

MRS. JONES. Sometimes he does, sir, and sometimes he gives it to me for the children. Of course he would work if he could get it, sir, but it seems there are a great many people out of work.

BARTHWICK. Ah! Yes. We — er — won't go into that. [*Sympathetically*] And how about your work here? Do you find it hard?

MRS. JONES. Oh! no, sir, no, hard, sir; except of course, when I get my sleep at night.

BARTHWICK. Ah! And you have all the rooms? And sometimes, I suppose, you go out for cook?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir.

BARTHWICK. And you've been here this morning?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, of course I had to go to the greengrocer's.

BARTHWICK. Exactly. So your husband earns nothing? And he's a bad character.

MRS. JONES. No, sir, I don't know that, sir. I think there's a great deal of good in him; though he does turn out very bad sometimes. And of course I don't like to leave him, but I ought to, because really I hardly know how to stay with him. He often puts his hand to me. Not long ago he gave me a blow here [*touches her forehead*]. I can feel it now. So I think I ought to leave him, don't *you*, sir?

BARTHWICK. Ah! I can't help you there. It's a very serious thing to leave your husband. Very serious thing.

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, of course I'm afraid of what he might do to me if I were to leave him; he can be very violent.

BARTHWICK. H'm! Well, you can't pretend to say anything about it. It's the bad principle I'm speaking of —

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir; I know I can't help me. I know I must provide for myself, and of course I know that he has a very hard life. And I'm fond of the children, and it's very hard for him to see them going without.

BARTHWICK [*hastily*]. Well — thank you, I just wanted to hear what you had to say. I don't think I need detain you any longer, Mrs. — Jones.

MRS. JONES. No, sir, thank you.

BARTHWICK. Good morning.

MRS. JONES. Good morning, good morning, ma'am.

BARTHWICK [*exchanging glances with his wife*]. By the way, Mrs. Jones, I think it is only fair to tell you, your cigarette-box — er — is missing.

MRS. JONES [*looking from one to the other*]. I am very sorry, sir.

BARTHWICK. Yes; you have never seen it, I suppose?

MRS. JONES [*realising that suspicion is upon her; with an uneasy motion*]. Where was it, sir; if you please,

THWICK [*evasively*]. Where did w say? Er—in this room, yes, room.

S. JONES. No, sir, I haven't seen of course if I'd seen it I should have d it.

THWICK [*giving her a rapid glance*]. — you are sure of that?

S. JONES [*impassively*]. Yes, sir. [*a slow nodding of her head*] I have en it, and of course I don't know it is.

[*She turns and goes quietly out*]
THWICK. H'm!

[*The three BARTHWICKS avoid each other's glances*]

[*The curtain falls*]

ACT II

FIRST. — *The JONES's lodgings, Terthyr Street, at half-past two clock.*

are room, with tattered oilcloth and amp, distempered walls, has an air tidy wretchedness. On the bed lies NES, half-dressed; his coat is crown across his feet, and muddy pots are lying on the floor close by. e is asleep. The door is opened and MRS. JONES comes in, dressed a a pinched black jacket and old black sailor hat; she carries a parcel rapped up in the "Times." She uts her parcel down, unwraps an pron, half a loaf, two onions, three potatoes, and a tiny piece of bacon. Taking a teapot from the cupboard, he rinses it, shakes into it some powdered tea out of a screw of paper, uts it on the hearth, and sitting in wooden chair quietly begins to cry]

ES [*stirring and yawning*]. That What's the time?

S. JONES [*drying her eyes, and in al voice*]. Half-past two.

ES. What you back so soon for?

S. JONES. I only had the half o-day, Jem.

ES [*on his back, and in a drowsy*]. Got anything for dinner?

S. JONES. Mrs. Barthwick's cook ne a little bit of bacon. I'm going ke a stew. [*She prepares for cook-* There's fourteen shillings owing nt, James, and of course I've only

got two and fourpence. They'll be coming for it to-day.

JONES [*turning towards her on his elbow*]. Let 'em come and find my surprise packet. I've had enough o' this tryin' for work. Why should I go round and round after a job like a bloomin' squirrel in a cage. "Give us a job, sir" — "Take a man on" — "Got a wife and three children." Sick of it I am! I'd sooner lie here and rot. "Jones, you come and join the demonstration; come and 'old a flag, and listen to the ruddy orators, and go 'ome as empty as you came." There's some that seems to like that — the sheep! When I go seekin' for a job now, and see the brutes lookin' me up an' down, it's like a thousand serpents in me. I'm not arskin' for any treat. A man wants to sweat hisself silly and not allowed — that's a rum start, ain't it? A man wants to sweat his soul out to keep the breath in him and ain't allowed — that's justice — that's freedom and all the rest of it! [*He turns his face towards the wall*] You're so milky mild; you don't know what goes on inside o' me. I'm done with the silly game. If they want me, let 'em come for me! [MRS. JONES stops cooking and stands unmoving at the table] I've tried and done with it, I tell you. I've never been afraid of what's before me. You mark my words — if you think they've broke my spirit, you're mis- took. I'll lie and rot sooner than arsk 'em again. What makes you stand like that — you long-sufferin', Gawd-forsaken image — that's why I can't keep my hands off you. So now you know. Work! You can work but you haven't the spirit of a louse!

MRS. JONES [*quietly*]. You talk more wild sometimes when you're yourself, James, than when you're not. If you don't get work, how are we to go on? They won't let us stay here; they're looking to their money to-day, I know.

JONES. I see this Barthwick o' yours every day goin' down to Pawlyment snug and comfortable to talk his silly soul out; an' I see that young calf, his son, swellin' it about, and goin' on the razzle-dazzle. Wot 'ave they done that makes 'em any better than wot I am? They never did a day's work in their lives. I see 'em day after day —

MRS. JONES. And I wish you wouldn't come after me like that, and hang about the house. You don't

seem able to keep away at all, and whatever you do it for I can't think, because of course they notice it.

JONES. I suppose I may go where I like. Where *may* I go? The other day I went to a place in the Edgware Road. "Gov'nor," I says to the boss, "take me on," I says. "I 'aven't done a stroke o' work not these two months; it takes the heart out of a man," I says; "I'm one to work; I'm not afraid of anything you can give me!" "My good man," 'e says, "I've had thirty of you here this morning. I took the first two," he says, "and that's all I want." "Thank you, then rot the world!" I says. "Blaspheming," he says, "is not the way to get a job. Out you go, my lad!" [*He laughs sardonically*] Don't you raise your voice because you're starvin'; don't yer even think of it; take it lyin' down! Take it like a sensible man, carn't you? And a little way down the street a lady says to me: [*Pinching his voice*] "D' you want to earn a few pence, my man?" and gives me her dog to 'old outside a shop — fat as a butler 'e was — tons o' meat had gone to the makin' of him. It did 'er good, it did, made 'er feel 'erself that *charitable*, but I see 'er lookin' at the copper standin' alongside o' me, for fear I should make off with 'er bloomin' fat dog. [*He sits on the edge of the bed and puts a boot on. Then looking up*] What's in that head o' yours? [*Almost pathetically*] Carn't you speak for once?

[*There is a knock, and Mrs. SEDDON, the landlady, appears, an anxious, harassed, shabby woman in working clothes*]

MRS. SEDDON. I thought I 'eard you come in, Mrs. Jones. I've spoke to my 'usband, but he says he really can't afford to wait another day.

JONES [*with scowling jocularity*]. Never you mind what your 'usband says, you go your own way like a proper independent woman. Here, Jenny, chuck her that.

[*Producing a sovereign from his trousers pocket, he throws it to his wife, who catches it in her apron with a gasp. JONES resumes the lacing of his boots*]

MRS. JONES [*rubbing the sovereign stealthily*]. I'm very sorry we're so late with it, and of course it's fourteen shillings, so if you've got six that will be right.

[MRS. SEDDON *takes the sovereign and fumbles for the change*]

JONES [*with his eyes fixed on his wife*]. Bit of a surprise for yer, ain't it?

MRS. SEDDON. Thank you, and sure I'm very much obliged. [*She indeed appear surprised*] I'll bring the change.

JONES [*mockingly*]. Don't mind it.

MRS. SEDDON. Thank you, and sure I'm very much obliged.

[*She slides*]

[MRS. JONES *gazes at JONES as he is still lacing up his boots*]

JONES. I've had a bit of [*Pulling out the crimson purse and loose coins*] Picked up a purse — pound and more.

MRS. JONES. Oh, James!

JONES. Oh, James! What Oh, James! I picked it up I tell you. This is lost property, this is!

MRS. JONES. But isn't there a name in it, or something?

JONES. Name? No, there ain't no name. This don't belong to no one 'ave visitin' cards. This belongs to a perfect lidy. Tike an' smell it. [*She pitches her the purse, which she catches gently to her nose*] Now, you tell me what I ought to have done. You can always tell me that. You can always tell me I ought to ha' done, can't yer?

MRS. JONES [*laying down the purse*]. I can't say what you ought to have done, James. Of course the money wasn't yours; you've taken some of else's money.

JONES. Findin'g's keeping. I'll take it as wages for the time I've gone to the streets asking for what's my money. I'll take it for what's overdue, d'ye see? [*With strange triumph*] I've got it in my pocket, my girl. [*Mrs. JONES goes on again with the preparation of her meal, JONES looking at her furtively*] Money in my pocket! And I'm goin' to waste it. With this 'ere money I'm goin' to Canada. I'll let you have a pound. [*A silence*] You've talked of leavin' me. You've offered me I treat you badly — well I 'ope you'll be glad when I'm gone.

MRS. JONES [*impassively*]. You've treated me very badly, James, and of course I can't prevent your going; can't tell whether I shall be glad you're gone.

JONES. It'll change my luck. I 'ad nothing but bad luck since I

up with you. *[More softly]* And we 'ad no bloomin' picnic.

MRS. JONES. Of course it would have been better for us if we had never met. We weren't meant for each other. But we've set against me, that's what you and you *have* been for a long time. You treat me so badly, James, after that Rosie and all. You never seem to think of the children I've had to bring into the world, of all the trouble I've had to keep, and what'll become of them when we're gone.

MRS. JONES *[crossing the room gloomily]*. If I think I want to leave the little ones you're bloomin' well mistaken. MRS. JONES. Of course I know you're of them.

MRS. JONES *[fingering the purse, half angry]*. Well, then, you stow it, old man. The kids'll get along better with than when I'm here. If I'd had as much as I do now, I'd never had one o' them. What's the use of bringin' 'em into a state o' things like this? It's a crime, that's what it is; you find it out too late; that's the matter with this 'ere world.

[He puts the purse back in his pocket]

MRS. JONES. Of course it would have been better for them, poor little ones; but they're your own children, I wonder at you talkin' like that. I could miss them dreadfully if I was to lose them.

MRS. JONES *[sullenly]*. An' you ain't the one. If I make money out there lookin' up, he sees her shaking out her coat — *[in a changed voice]* Leave your coat alone!

[The silver box drops from the pocket, scattering the cigarettes upon the bed. Taking up the box she stares at it; he rushes at her and snatches the box away]

MRS. JONES *[cowering back against the wall]*. Oh, Jem! oh, Jem!

MRS. JONES *[dropping the box on to the table]*. I don't mind what you're sayin'! When you say I'll take and chuck it in the fire along with that there purse. I know when I was in liquor, and for what I do when you're in liquor you're responsible — and that's Gawd's truth as you ought to know. I don't want the thing — I won't have it. I won't let it out o' spite. I'm no thief, I tell you, and don't you call me one, or it'll be worse for you.

MRS. JONES *[twisting her apron strings]*. It's Mr. Barthwick's! You've taken away my reputation. Oh, Jem, whatever made you?

JONES. What d' you mean?

MRS. JONES. It's been missed; they think it's me. Oh! whatever made you do it, Jem?

JONES. I tell you I was in liquor. I don't want it; what's the good of it to me? If I were to pawn it they'd only nab me. I'm no thief. I'm no worse than wot that young Barthwick is; he brought 'ome that purse that I picked up — a lady's purse — 'ad it off 'er in a row, kept sayin' 'e 'd scored 'er off. Well, I scored 'im off. Tight as an owl 'e was! And d' you think anything'll happen to him?

MRS. JONES *[as though speaking to herself]*. Oh, Jem! it's the bread out of our mouths!

JONES. Is it then? I'll make it hot for 'em yet. What about that purse? What about young Barthwick? *[MRS. JONES comes forward to the table and tries to take the box; JONES prevents her]* What do you want with that? You drop it, I say!

MRS. JONES. I'll take it back and tell them all about it.

[She attempts to wrest the box from him]

JONES. Ah, would yer?

[He drops the box, and rushes on to her with a snarl. She slips back past the bed. He follows; the chair is overturned. The door is opened; SNOW comes in, a detective in plain clothes and bowler hat, with clipped moustaches. JONES drops his arms. MRS. JONES stands by the window gasping; SNOW, advancing swiftly to the table, puts his hand on the silver box]

SNOW. Doin' a bit o' skylarkin'! Fancy this is what I'm after. J. B. Barthwick, the very same. *[He gets back to the door scrutinizing the crest and cypher on the box. To MRS. JONES]* I'm a police officer. Are you Mrs. Jones?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir.

SNOW. My instructions are to take you on a charge of stealing this box from J. Barthwick, Esquire, M. P., of 6 Rockingham Gate. Anything you say may be used against you. Well, Missis!

MRS. JONES *[in her quiet voice, still out of breath, her hand upon her breast]*. Of course I did not take it, sir. I never have.

taken anything that didn't belong to me; and of course I know nothing about it.

SNOW. You were at the house this morning; you did the room in which the box was left; you were alone in the room. I find the box 'ere. You say you didn't take it?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, of course I say I did not take it, because I did *not*.

SNOW. Then how does the box come to be here?

MRS. JONES. I would rather not say anything about it.

SNOW. Is this your husband?

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir, this is my husband, sir.

SNOW. Do you wish to say anything before I take her? [JONES remains silent, with his head bent down] Well then, Missis. I'll just trouble you to come along with me quietly.

MRS. JONES [twisting her hands]. Of course I wouldn't say I hadn't taken it if I had — and I *didn't* take it, indeed I didn't. Of course I know appearances are against me, and I can't tell you what really happened. But my children are at school, and they'll be coming home — and I don't know what they'll do without me!

SNOW. Your 'usband 'll see to them, don't you worry.

[He takes the woman gently by the arm]

JONES. You drop it — she's all right! [Sullenly] I took the thing myself.

SNOW [eying him]. There, there, it does you credit. Come along, Missis.

JONES [passionately]. Drop it, I say, you blooming teck. She's my wife; she's a respectable woman. Take her if you dare!

SNOW. Now, now. What's the good of this? Keep a civil tongue, and it'll be the better for all of us.

[He puts his whistle in his mouth and draws the woman to the door]

JONES [with a rush]. Drop her, and put up your 'ands, or I'll soon make yer. You leave her alone, will yer! Don't I tell yer, I took the thing myself!

SNOW [blowing his whistle]. Drop your hands, or I'll take you too. Ah, would you?

[JONES, closing, deals him a blow.

A POLICEMAN in uniform appears; there is a short struggle and JONES is overpowered. MRS.

JONES raises her hands and drops her face on them]

[The curtain falls]

SCENE SECOND. — *The BARTHWICK dining-room the same evening.*
BARTHWICKS are seated at des

MRS. BARTHWICK. John! [A broken by the cracking of nuts] Jo

BARTHWICK. I wish you'd about the nuts — they're uneatab

[He puts one in his m

MRS. BARTHWICK. It's not th son for them. I called on the roods.

[BARTHWICK fills his glass port]

JACK. Crackers, please, Dad.

[BARTHWICK passes the cr His demeanour is reflecti

MRS. BARTHWICK. Lady Hol has got very stout. I've notic coming for a long time.

BARTHWICK [gloomily]. Stout? takes up the crackers — with trans airiness] The Holyroods had trouble with their servants, hadn't

JACK. Crackers, please, Dad.

BARTHWICK [passing the cracker got into the papers. The cook, it?

MRS. BARTHWICK. No, the maid. I was talking it over with Holyrood. The girl used to hav young man to see her.

BARTHWICK [uneasily]. I'm no they were wise —

MRS. BARTHWICK. My dear what are you talking about? could there be any alternative? of the effect on the other servant

BARTHWICK. Of course in pri — I wasn't thinking of that.

JACK [maliciously]. Crackers, Dad.

[BARTHWICK is compelled t the crackers]

MRS. BARTHWICK. Lady Hol told me: "I had her up," she "I said to her, 'You'll leave my at once; I think your conduc graceful. I can't tell, I don't and I don't wish to know, wha were doing. I send you away on ciple; you need not come to me character.' And the girl said: 'I don't give me my notice, my la want a month's wages. I'm per respectable. I've done nothing Done nothing!

BARTHWICK. H'm!

MRS. BARTHWICK. Servants too much license. They hang to so terribly you never can tell

're really thinking; it's as if they were all in a conspiracy to keep you in the dark. Even with Marlow, you feel he never lets you know what's in his mind. I hate that secretiveness; it destroys all confidence. I sometimes I should like to shake

JACK. Marlow's a most decent chap. I simply beastly every one knowing my affairs.

MRS. BARTHWICK. The less you say about me the better!

MRS. BARTHWICK. It goes all through the lower classes. You can tell when they are speaking the truth. To-day when I was shopping and leaving the Holyroods, one of the unemployed came up and spoke to me. I suppose I only had twenty pence or so to walk to the carriage, but he seemed to spring up in the street.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Ah! You must be very careful whom you speak to in these days.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I didn't answer him, of course. But I could see at once that he wasn't telling the truth.

MRS. BARTHWICK [*cracking a nut*]. There's a very good rule — look at their eyes.

JACK. Crackers, please, Dad.

MRS. BARTHWICK [*passing the crackers*]. If a man's eyes are straightforward I sometimes give them sixpence. It's against the principles, but it's most difficult to resist. If you see that they're desperate and dull, and shifty-looking, as so many of them are, it's certain to mean crime, or crime, or something unsatisfactory.

MRS. BARTHWICK. This man had dreadful eyes. He looked as if he would commit a murder. "I've 'ad to come to eat to-day," he said. Just that.

MRS. BARTHWICK. What was William doing? He ought to have been waiting.

JACK [*raising his wine-glass to his nose*]. This is the '63, Dad?

[BARTHWICK, holding his wine-glass to his eye, lowers it and passes it before his nose]

MRS. BARTHWICK. I hate people who can't speak the truth. [*Father and daughter exchange a look behind their port*]

It's just as easy to speak the truth as to lie. I've always found it easy enough. It makes it impossible to tell what is true; one feels as if one were continually being taken in.

BARTHWICK [*sententiously*]. The lower classes are their own enemies. If they would only trust us, they would get on so much better.

MRS. BARTHWICK. But even then it's so often their own fault. Look at that Mrs. Jones this morning.

BARTHWICK. I only want to know what's right in that matter. I had an occasion to see Roper this afternoon. I mentioned it to him. He's coming in this evening. It all depends on what the detective says. I've had my doubts. I've been thinking it over.

MRS. BARTHWICK. The woman impressed me most unfavourably. She seemed to have no shame. That affair she was talking about — she and that man when they were young, so immoral! And before you and Jack I could have put her out of the room!

BARTHWICK. Oh! I don't want to excuse them, but in looking at these matters one must consider —

MRS. BARTHWICK. Perhaps you're saying the man's employer was wrong in dismissing him?

BARTHWICK. Of course not. It's not there that I feel doubt. What I ask myself is —

JACK. Port, please, Dad.

BARTHWICK [*circulating the decanter in a religious imitation of the rising and setting of the sun*]. I ask myself whether we are sufficiently careful in making inquiries about people before we engage them, especially as regards moral conduct.

JACK. Pass the port, please, Mother.

MRS. BARTHWICK [*passing it*]. My dear boy, aren't you drinking too much?

[JACK fills his glass]

MARLOW [*entering*]. Detective Snow to see you, sir.

BARTHWICK [*uneasily*]. Ah! say I'll be with him in a minute.

MRS. BARTHWICK [*without turning*]. Let him come in here, Marlow.

[SNOW enters in an overcoat, hat, and bowler hat in hand]

BARTHWICK [*half-rising*]. Oh! Good evening!

SNOW. Good evening, sir; good evening, ma'am. I've called round to report what I've done, rather late, I'm afraid — another case took me away. [*He takes the silver box out of his pocket, causing a sensation in the BARTHWICK family*] This is the identical article, I believe.

BARTHWICK. Certainly, certainly.

SNOW. Havin' your crest and cypher, as you described to me, sir, I'd no hesitation in the matter.

BARTHWICK. Excellent. Will you have a glass of [*He glances at the waning port*]—er—sherry—[*pours out sherry*]. Jack, just give Mr. Snow this.

[*JACK rises and gives the glass to SNOW; then, lolling in his chair, regards him indolently*]

SNOW [*drinking off wine and putting down the glass*]. After seeing you I went round to this woman's lodgings, sir. It's a low neighbourhood, and I thought it as well to place a constable below—and not without 'e was wanted, as things turned out.

BARTHWICK. Indeed!

SNOW. Yes, sir, I 'ad some trouble. I asked her to account for the presence of the article. She could give me no answer, except to deny the theft; so I took her into custody; then her husband came for me, so I was obliged to take him, too, for assault. He was very violent on the way to the station—very violent—threatened you and your son, and altogether he was a handful, I can tell you.

MRS. BARTHWICK. What a ruffian he must be!

SNOW. Yes, ma'am, a rough customer.

JACK [*sipping his wine, bemused*]. Punch the beggar's head.

SNOW. Given to drink, as I understand, sir.

MRS. BARTHWICK. It's to be hoped he will get a severe punishment.

SNOW. The odd thing is, sir, that he persists in sayin' he took the box himself.

BARTHWICK. Took the box himself! [*He smiles*] What does he think to gain by that?

SNOW. He says the young gentleman was intoxicated last night—[*JACK stops the cracking of a nut, and looks at SNOW. BARTHWICK, losing his smile, has put his wine-glass down; there is a silence—SNOW, looking from face to face, remarks*]—took him into the house and gave him whisky; and under the influence of an empty stomach the man says he took the box.

MRS. BARTHWICK. The impudent wretch!

BARTHWICK. D' you mean that he—er—intends to put this forward to-morrow—

SNOW. That'll be his line, sir; but

whether he's endeavouring to shie his wife, or whether [*he looks at her*] there's something in it, will be for the magistrate to say.

MRS. BARTHWICK [*haughtily*]. What thing in what? I don't understand. As if my son would bring a man that into the house!

BARTHWICK [*from the fireplace, an effort to be calm*]. My son can do for himself, no doubt.—Well, what do you say?

MRS. BARTHWICK [*sharply*]. Does he say? Why, of course, he says the whole story's stuff!

JACK [*embarrassed*]. Well, of course, I—of course, I don't know any more about it.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I should not, indeed! [*To SNOW*] The man is an audacious ruffian!

BARTHWICK [*suppressing jumps*]. In view of my son's saying there's something in this—this fable—will it be necessary to proceed against the man under the circumstances?

SNOW. We shall have to come and see him with the assault, sir. It would be as well for your son to come down to the Court. There'll be a remand on his bail, no doubt. The queer thing is there was quite a sum of money found on him, and a crimson silk purse. [*BARTHWICK starts; JACK rises and sits down*] I suppose the lady hasn't missed her purse?

BARTHWICK [*hastily*]. Oh, no! No!

JACK. No!

MRS. BARTHWICK [*dreamily*]. [*To SNOW*] I've been inquiring of the servants. This man *does* hang round the house. I shall feel much safer if he gets a good long sentence; I think we ought to be protected against such ruffians.

BARTHWICK. Yes, yes, of course, on principle—but in this case we have a number of things to think of. [*To SNOW*] I suppose, as you say, the man must be charged, eh?

SNOW. No question about that.

BARTHWICK [*staring gloomily at JACK*]. This prosecution goes very much against the grain with me. I have great sympathy with the poor. In my position I'm bound to recognise the distress that is amongst them. The condition of the people leaves much to be desired. I follow me? I wish I could see my son to drop it.

S. BARTHWICK [*sharply*]. John! imply not fair to other people. Putting property at the mercy of one who likes to take it.

BARTHWICK [*trying to make signs to side*]. I'm not defending him, not I'm trying to look at the matter

ly. S. BARTHWICK. Nonsense, John, is a time for everything.

ow [*rather sardonically*]. I might out, sir, that to withdraw the e of stealing would not make much ence, because the facts must come e looks significantly at JACK] in nce to the assault; and as I said charge will have to go forward.

BARTHWICK [*hastily*]. Yes, oh! ex- It's entirely on the woman's nt — entirely a matter of my own e feelings.

ow. If I were you, sir, I should ings take their course. It's not there'll be much difficulty. These e are very quick settled.

BARTHWICK [*doubtfully*]. You think you think so?

K [*rousing himself*]. I say, what I have to swear to?

ow. That's best known to your- r. [*Retreating to the door*] Better y a solicitor, sir, in case anything d arise. We shall have the butler ove the loss of the article. You'll e me going, I'm rather pressed to-

The case may come on any after eleven. Good evening, sir; evening, ma'am. I shall have to ee the box in court to-morrow, so I'll excuse me, sir, I may as well t with me.

[*He takes the silver box and leaves them with a little bow*]

[BARTHWICK makes a move to follow him, then dashing his hands beneath his coat tails, speaks with desperation]

BARTHWICK. I do wish you'd leave o manage things myself. You will our nose into matters you know ng of. A pretty mess you've of this!

rs. BARTHWICK [*coldly*]. I don't in least know what you're talking . If you can't stand up for your s, I can. I've no patience with principles, it's such nonsense.

BARTHWICK. Principles! Good ens! What have principles to do it for goodness sake? Don't you that Jack was drunk last night!

JACK. Dad!

MRS. BARTHWICK [*in horror, rising*]. Jack!

JACK. Look here, Mother — I had supper. Everybody does. I mean to say — you know what I mean — it's absurd to call it being drunk. At Oxford everybody gets a bit "on" some times —

MRS. BARTHWICK. Well, I think it's most dreadful! If that is really what you do at Oxford —

JACK [*angrily*]. Well, why did you send me there? One must do as other fellows do. It's such nonsense, I mean, to call it being drunk. Of course I'm awfully sorry. I've had such a beastly headache all day.

BARTHWICK. Tcha! If you'd only had the common decency to remember what happened when you came in. Then we should know what truth there was in what this fellow says — as it is, it's all the most confounded darkness.

JACK [*staring as though at half-formed visions*]. I just get a — and then — it's gone —

MRS. BARTHWICK. Oh, Jack! do you mean to say you were so tipsy you can't even remember —

JACK. Look here, Mother! Of course I remember I came — I must have come —

BARTHWICK [*unguardedly, and walking up and down*]. Tcha! — and that infernal purse! Good Heavens! It'll get into the papers. Who on earth could have foreseen a thing like this? Better to have lost a dozen cigarette-boxes, and said nothing about it. [*To his wife*] It's all your doing. I told you so from the first. I wish to goodness Roper would come!

MRS. BARTHWICK [*sharply*]. I don't know what you're talking about, John.

BARTHWICK [*turning on her*]. No, you — you — you don't know anything! [*Sharply*] Where the devil is Roper? If he can see a way out of this he's a better man than I take him for. I defy any one to see a way out of it. I can't.

JACK. Look here, don't excite Dad — I can simply say I was too beastly tired, and don't remember anything except that I came in and [*in a dying voice*] went to bed the same as usual.

BARTHWICK. Went to bed? Who knows where you went — I've lost all confidence. For all I know you slept on the floor.

JACK [*indignantly*]. I didn't, I slept on the ——

BARTHWICK [*sitting on the sofa*]. Who cares where you slept; what does it matter if he mentions the —— the —— a perfect disgrace?

MRS. BARTHWICK. What? [*A silence*] I insist on knowing.

JACK. Oh! nothing ——

MRS. BARTHWICK. Nothing? What do you mean by nothing, Jack? There's your father in such a state about it ——

JACK. It's only my purse.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Your purse! You know perfectly well you haven't got one.

JACK. Well, it was somebody else's —— it was all a joke —— I didn't want the beastly thing ——

MRS. BARTHWICK. Do you mean that you had another person's purse, and that this man took it too?

BARTHWICK. Tcha! Of course he took it too! A man like that Jones will make the most of it. It'll get into the papers.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I don't understand. What on earth is all the fuss about? [*Bending over JACK, and softly*] Jack now, tell me dear! Don't be afraid. What is it? Come!

JACK. Oh, don't, Mother!

MRS. BARTHWICK. But don't what, dear?

JACK. It was pure sport. I don't know how I got the thing. Of course I'd had a bit of a row —— I didn't know what I was doing —— I was —— I was —— well, you know —— I suppose I must have pulled the bag out of her hand.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Out of her hand? Whose hand? What bag —— whose bag?

JACK. Oh! I don't know —— her bag —— it belonged to —— [*in a desperate and rising voice*] a woman.

MRS. BARTHWICK. A woman? Oh! Jack! No!

JACK [*jumping up*]. You would have it. I didn't want to tell you. It's not my fault.

[*The door opens and MARLOW ushers in a man of middle age, inclined to corpulence, in evening dress. He has a ruddy, thin moustache, and dark, quick-moving little eyes. His eyebrows are Chinese*]

MARLOW. Mr. Roper, sir.

[*He leaves the room*]

ROPER [*with a quick look round*]. How do you do?

[*But neither JACK nor*

BARTHWICK make a sign

BARTHWICK [*hurrying*]. Thankness you've come, Roper. You remember what I told you this afternoon we've just had the detective here

ROPER. Got the box?

BARTHWICK. Yes, yes, but here —— it wasn't the charwoman, her drunken loafer of a husband, the things —— he says that fellow [*He waves his hand at JACK, who, shoulder raised, seems trying to give a blow*] let him into the house last night. Can you imagine such a thing!

[ROPER

BARTHWICK [*with excited emotion*]. It's no laughing matter, Roper. You see about that business of Jack —— don't you see —— the brute took both the things —— took that purse. It'll get into the papers.

ROPER [*raising his eyebrows*]. The purse! Depravity in his nature. What does your son say?

BARTHWICK. He remembers nothing. D——n! Did you ever see such a mess? It'll get into the papers.

MRS. BARTHWICK [*with her hands on her eyes*]. Oh! it's not that ——

[BARTHWICK and ROPER turn to look at her]

BARTHWICK. It's the idea of a woman —— she's just heard —— nod. And Mrs. BARTHWICK, seeing this, gives a slow look at JACK, and then down at the table] What on earth can be done, Roper? A ruffian like Jones will make all the capital out of that purse.

MRS. BARTHWICK. I don't know. That Jack took that purse.

BARTHWICK. What —— where did that woman come here for it this morning?

MRS. BARTHWICK. Here? For the impudence? Why wasn't I told?

[*She looks round from face to face —— no one answers her, a pause*]

BARTHWICK [*suddenly*]. What have you done, Roper?

ROPER [*quietly to JACK*]. I'm sorry you didn't leave your latch-key in the door?

JACK [*sullenly*]. Yes, I did.

BARTHWICK. Good heavens! What next?

MRS. BARTHWICK. I'm certain never let that man into the house. It's a wild invention. I'm sure there's not a word of truth in it, Mr. Roper.

ROPER [*very suddenly*]. Where did he sleep last night?

JACK [*promptly*]. On the sofa, there [*imitating*] that is — I —

BARTHWICK. On the sofa? D' you want to say you didn't go to bed?

JACK [*sullenly*]. No.

BARTHWICK. If you don't remember anything, how can you remember that?

JACK. Because I woke up there in the morning.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Oh, Jack!

BARTHWICK. Good Gracious!

JACK. And Mrs. Jones saw me. I know you wouldn't bait me so.

ROPER. Do you remember giving me a drink?

JACK. By Jove, I do seem to remember a fellow with — a fellow with [*looks at ROPER*] I say, d' you remember me —?

ROPER [*quick as lightning*]. With a face?

JACK [*with illumination*]. I do — I distinctly remember his —

[BARTHWICK moves abruptly; MRS. BARTHWICK looks at ROPER angrily, and touches her son's arm]

MRS. BARTHWICK. You don't remember, it's ridiculous! I don't believe a man was ever here at all.

BARTHWICK. You must speak the truth if it is the truth. But if you do remember such a dirty business, I shall have my hands of you altogether.

JACK [*glaring at them*]. Well, what devil —

MRS. BARTHWICK. Jack!

JACK. Well, Mother, I — I don't know what you do want.

MRS. BARTHWICK. We want you to tell the truth and say you never let a man into the house.

BARTHWICK. Of course if you think you really gave this man whisky in that disgraceful way, and let him see you'd been doing, and were in a disgusting condition that you remember a word of it —

ROPER [*quick*]. I've no memory myself — never had.

BARTHWICK [*desperately*]. I don't know what you're to say.

ROPER. [To JACK] Say nothing at all. Don't put yourself in a false position. The man stole the things or the woman stole the things, you had nothing to do with it. You were asleep on the sofa.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Your leaving the

latch-key in the door was quite bad enough, there's no need to mention anything else. [*Touching his forehead softly*] My dear, how hot your head is!

JACK. But I want to know what I'm to do. [*Passionately*] I won't be badgered like this.

[MRS. BARTHWICK recoils from him]

ROPER [*very quickly*]. You forget all about it. You were asleep.

JACK. Must I go down to the Court to-morrow?

ROPER [*shaking his head*]. No.

BARTHWICK [*in a relieved voice*]. Is that so?

ROPER. Yes.

BARTHWICK. But you'll go, Roper.

ROPER. Yes.

JACK [*with wan cheerfulness*]. Thanks, awfully! So long as I don't have to go. [*Putting his hand up to his head*] I think if you'll excuse me — I've had a most beastly day.

[He looks from his father to his mother]

MRS. BARTHWICK [*turning quickly*]. Good-night, my boy.

JACK. Good-night, Mother.

[He goes out. MRS. BARTHWICK heaves a sigh. There is a silence]

BARTHWICK. He gets off too easily. But for my money that woman would have prosecuted him.

ROPER. You find money useful.

BARTHWICK. I've my doubts whether we ought to hide the truth —

ROPER. There'll be a remand.

BARTHWICK. What! D' you mean he'll have to appear on the remand.

ROPER. Yes.

BARTHWICK. H'm, I thought you'd be able to — Look here, Roper, you must keep that purse out of the papers.

[ROPER fixes his little eyes on him and nods]

MRS. BARTHWICK. Mr. Roper, don't you think the magistrate ought to be told what sort of people these Jones's are; I mean about their immorality before they were married. I don't know if John told you.

ROPER. Afraid it's not material.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Not material?

ROPER. Purely private life! May have happened to the magistrate.

BARTHWICK [*with a movement as if to shift a burden*]. Then you'll take the thing into your hands?

ROPER. If the gods are kind.

[*He holds his hand out*]

BARTHWICK [*shaking it dubiously*]. Kind — eh? What? You going?

ROPER. Yes. I've another case, something like yours — most unexpected.

[*He bows to MRS. BARTHWICK, and goes out, followed by BARTHWICK, talking to the last. MRS. BARTHWICK at the table bursts into smothered sobs. BARTHWICK returns*]

BARTHWICK. [*To himself*] There'll be a scandal!

MRS. BARTHWICK [*disguising her grief at once*] I simply can't imagine what Roper means by making a joke of a thing like that!

BARTHWICK [*staring strangely*]. You! You can't imagine anything! You've no more imagination than a fly!

MRS. BARTHWICK [*angrily*]. You dare to tell me that I have no imagination.

BARTHWICK [*flustered*]. I — I'm upset. From beginning to end, the whole thing has been utterly against my principles.

MRS. BARTHWICK. Rubbish! You haven't any! Your principles are nothing in the world but sheer — fright!

BARTHWICK [*walking to the window*]. I've never been frightened in my life. You heard what Roper said. It's enough to upset one when a thing like this happens. Everything one says and does seems to turn in one's mouth — it's — it's uncanny. It's not the sort of thing I've been accustomed to. [*As though stifling, he throws the window open. The faint sobbing of a child comes in*] What's that? [*They listen*]

MRS. BARTHWICK [*sharply*]. I can't stand that crying. I must send Marlow to stop it. My nerves are all on edge.

[*She rings the bell*]

BARTHWICK. I'll shut the window; you'll hear nothing.

[*He shuts the window. There is silence*]

MRS. BARTHWICK [*sharply*]. That's no good! It's on my nerves. Nothing upsets me like a child's crying. [*MARLOW comes in*] What's that noise of crying, Marlow? It sounds like a child.

BARTHWICK. It is a child. I can see it against the railings.

MARLOW [*opening the window, and looking out — quietly*]. It's Mrs. Jones's

little boy, ma'am; he came here his mother.

MRS. BARTHWICK [*moving to the window*]. Poor little chap! we oughtn't to go on with this!

BARTHWICK [*sitting heavily in*]. Ah! but it's out of our hands!

[*MRS. BARTHWICK turns to the window. There is an expression of distress on her face. She stands motionless, crying, her hands on her lips. The crying ceases again. BARTHWICK comes forward, and covers his eyes with his hands, and then he turns away. The window is shut. The crying ceases*]

[*The curtain falls*]

ACT III

Eight days have passed, and the scene is now a London Police Court at one o'clock. A canopied seat of Justice is mounted by the lion and unicorn. Before the fire a worn-looking constable, TRATE, is warming his coat. Two little girls in faded dresses and orange rags, who are prisoners, stand before the dock. Close to the dock is a RELIEVING OFFICE, where a constable in a brown overcoat, and a short brown-haired man, stand. Beside the little girls stand two constables. On a bench are sitting BARTHWICK, ROPER, and behind them JAMES. The railed enclosure are seeded with men and women. Some prisoners sit or stand about the court.

MAGISTRATE [*in his paternalistic, ferocious voice, hissing his words*]. Let us dispose of these young ladies.

USHER. Theresa Livens, and Mary Livens. [*The bald CONSTABLE points to the little girls, who remain silent, their faces illused, inattentive*]

[*The RELIEVING OFFICER points to the witness-box*]

USHER. The evidence you give in the Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Help you God! Kiss the book!

[*The book is kissed*]

RELIEVING OFFICER [*in a measured tone, pausing slightly at each sentence, so that his evidence may be inscribed in the Court book*]. At ten o'clock this morning, your Honor, I found these two little girls

Pulham, crying outside a public-house. Asked where their home was, and they had no home. Mother gone away. Asked about their father, they had no work. Where they slept last night. At the magistrate's. I've made inquiries, your Worship. The wife has broken up the home and gone on the streets. The father is out of work and living in a lodging-house. The husband has eight children of her age and says she can't afford to keep them any longer.

MAGISTRATE *[returning to his seat beneath the canopy of Justice]*. Now, let me hear. You say the mother is on the streets. What evidence have you of

RELIEVING OFFICER. I have the mother here, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. Very well; then let me hear from her. *[There are cries of "Yes, yes." The MAGISTRATE leans forward, and stares with hard compassion at the mother and her children.]* LIVENs comes in. He has a grizzled hair, and a muffled voice. He stands beside the witness-box. And you are their father? Now, don't you keep your little girls at home? How is it you leave them to roam about the streets like this?

LIVENs. I've got no home, your Worship. I'm living from 'and to 'and. I've got no work; and nothin' to do.

MAGISTRATE. How is that?

LIVENs *[ashamedly]*. My wife, she has come up, and pawned the

MAGISTRATE. But what made you

LIVENs. Your Worship, I'd no time to stop 'er; she did it when I was lookin' for work.

MAGISTRATE. Did you ill-treat her?

LIVENs *[emphatically]*. I never raised my hand to her in my life, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. Then what was it — what was it?

LIVENs. Yes, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. Was she loose in her head?

LIVENs *[in a low voice]*. Yes, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. And where is she now?

LIVENs. I don't know, your Worship. She got off with a man, and after that

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes. Who knows

anything of her? *[To the bald CONSTABLE]* Is she known here?

RELIEVING OFFICER. Not in this district, your Worship; but I have ascertained that she is well known —

MAGISTRATE. Yes — yes; we'll stop at that. Now *[to the father]* you say that she has broken up your home, and left these little girls. What provision can you make for them? You look a strong man.

LIVENs. So I am, your Worship. I'm willin' enough to work, but for the life of me I can't get anything to do.

MAGISTRATE. But have you tried?

LIVENs. I've tried everything, your Worship — I've tried my 'ardest.

MAGISTRATE. Well, well —

[There is a silence]

RELIEVING OFFICER. If your Worship thinks it's a case, my people are willing to take them.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes, I know; but I've no evidence that this man is not the proper guardian for his children.

[He rises and goes back to the fire]

RELIEVING OFFICER. The mother, your Worship, is able to get access to them.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes; the mother, of course, is an improper person to have anything to do with them. *[To the father]* Well, now what do you say?

LIVENs. Your Worship, I can only say that if I could get work I should be only too willing to provide for them. But what can I do, your Worship? Here I am obliged to live from 'and to 'and in these 'ere common lodging-houses. I'm a strong man — I'm willing to work — I'm half as alive again as some of 'em — but you see, your Worship, my 'air's turned a bit, owing to the fever — *[touches his hair]* — and that's against me; and I don't seem to get a chance anyhow.

MAGISTRATE. Yes — yes. *[Slowly]* Well, I think it's a case. *[Staring his hardest at the little girls]* Now, are you willing that these little girls should be sent to a home?

LIVENs. Yes, your Worship, I should be very willing.

MAGISTRATE. Well, I'll remand them for a week. Bring them again to-day week; if I see no reason against it then, I'll make an order.

RELIEVING OFFICER. To-day week, your Worship.

[The bald CONSTABLE takes the little girls out by the shoulders.]

The father follows them. The MAGISTRATE, returning to his seat, bends over and talks to his CLERK inaudibly]

BARTHWICK [*speaking behind his hand*]. A painful case, Roper; very distressing state of things.

ROPER. Hundreds like this in the Police Courts.

BARTHWICK. Most distressing! The more I see of it, the more important this question of the condition of the people seems to become. I shall certainly make a point of taking up the cudgels in the House. I shall move —

[*The MAGISTRATE ceases talking to his CLERK*]

CLERK. Remands!

[*BARTHWICK stops abruptly. There is a stir and MRS. JONES comes in by the public door; JONES, ushered by policemen, comes from the prisoners' door. They file into the dock*]

CLERK. James Jones, Jane Jones.

USHER. Jane Jones!

BARTHWICK [*in a whisper*]. The purse — the purse must be kept out of it, Roper. Whatever happens you must keep that out of the papers.

[*ROPER nods*]

BALD CONSTABLE. Hush!

[*MRS. JONES, dressed in her thin, black, wispy dress, and black straw hat, stands motionless with hands crossed on the front rail of the dock. JONES leans against the back rail of the dock, and keeps half turning, glancing defiantly about him. He is haggard and unshaven*]

CLERK [*consulting with his papers*]. This is the case remanded from last Wednesday, sir. Theft of a silver cigarette-box and assault on the police; the two charges were taken together. Jane Jones! James Jones!

MAGISTRATE [*staring*]. Yes, yes; I remember.

CLERK. Jane Jones.

MRS. JONES. Yes, sir.

CLERK. Do you admit stealing a silver cigarette-box valued at five pounds, ten shillings, from the house of John Barthwick, M. P., between the hours of 11 p.m. on Easter Monday and 8.45 a.m. on Easter Tuesday last? Yes, or no?

MRS. JONES [*in a low voice*]. No, sir, I do not, sir.

CLERK. James Jones? Do you

admit stealing a silver cigarette-box valued at five pounds, ten shillings, from the house of John Barthwick, M. P., between the hours of 11 p.m. on Easter Monday and 8.45 a.m. on Easter Tuesday last? And further, do you admit assaulting the police when in the execution of their duty at 3 p.m. on Easter Tuesday? Yes or no?

JONES [*sullenly*]. Yes, but a lot to say about it.

MAGISTRATE. [*To the CLERK*] — yes. But how comes it that two people are charged with the same offence? Are they husband and wife?

CLERK. Yes, sir. You ordered a remand for evidence as to the story of the prisoner.

MAGISTRATE. Have they been in custody since?

CLERK. You released the woman on her own recognisances, sir.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes, the case of the silver box; I remember. Well?

CLERK. Thomas Marlow.

[*The cry of "Thomas Marlow is repeated. MARLOW rises and steps into the witness box*]

USHER. The evidence you give in the court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, help you God. Kiss the book.

[*The book is kissed. MARLOW's silver cigarette-box is handed up, and placed on the rail*]

CLERK [*reading from his paper*]. Your name is Thomas Marlow, you butler to John Barthwick, of 6, Rockingham Gate?

MARLOW. Yes, sir.

CLERK. Is that the box?

MARLOW. Yes, sir.

CLERK. And did you miss the box at 8.45 on the following morning going to remove the tray?

MARLOW. Yes, sir.

CLERK. Is the female prisoner acquainted with you? [*MARLOW nods*] Is a charwoman employed at 6, Rockingham Gate? [*Again MARLOW nods*] At the time of your missing the box, was she in the room alone?

MARLOW. Yes, sir.

CLERK. Did you afterwards communicate the loss to your master, and did he send you to the police station?

MARLOW. Yes, sir.

K. [To MRS. JONES] Have you
g to ask him?

JONES. No, sir, nothing, thank

K. [To JONES] James Jones,
u anything to ask this witness?
. I don't know 'im.

STRATE. Are you sure you put
in the place you say at the time
?

OW. Yes, your Worship.

STRATE. Very well; then now
ve the officer.

MARLOW *leaves the box, and*
SNOW *goes into it*

R. The evidence you give to
t shall be the truth, the whole
nd nothing but the truth, so
God. [The book is kissed]

K [reading from his papers].
me is Robert Snow? You are
ive in the X. B. division of the
litan police force? According
uctions received did you on
Tuesday last proceed to the
s lodgings at 34, Merthyr
St. Soames's? And did you on
see the box produced, lying on
e?

Yes, sir.

Is that the box?

[fingering the box]. Yes, sir.

K. And did you thereupon take
n of it, and charge the female
with theft of the box from 6,
ham Gate? And did she deny
e?

Yes, sir.

K. Did you take her into

Yes, sir.

STRATE. What was her be-

Perfectly quiet, your Wor-
he persisted in the denial.
ll.

STRATE. Do you know her?

No, your Worship.

STRATE. Is she known here?

CONSTABLE. No, your Wor-
ey're neither of them known,
othing against them at all.

K. [To MRS. JONES] Have you
g to ask the officer?

JONES. No, sir, thank you,
hing to ask him.

STRATE. Very well then — go

K [reading from his paper]. And
u were taking the female pris-
l the male prisoner interpose,

and endeavour to hinder you in the
execution of your duty, and did he
strike you a blow?

SNOW. Yes, sir.

CLERK. And did he say, "You let
her go, I took the box myself"?

SNOW. He did.

CLERK. And did you blow your
whistle and obtain the assistance of
another constable, and take him into
custody?

SNOW. I did.

CLERK. Was he violent on the way
to the station, and did he use bad lan-
guage, and did he several times repeat
that he had taken the box himself?
[SNOW nods] Did you thereupon ask
him in what manner he had stolen the
box? And did you understand him to
say he had entered the house at the
invitation of young Mr. Barthwick
[BARTHWICK, turning in his seat, frowns
at ROPER] after midnight on Easter
Monday, and partaken of whisky, and
that under the influence of the whisky
he had taken the box?

SNOW. I did, sir.

CLERK. And was his demeanour
throughout very violent?

SNOW. It was very violent.

JONES [breaking in]. Violent — of
course it was! You put your 'ands on
my wife when I kept tellin' you I took
the thing myself.

MAGISTRATE [hissing, with protruded
neck]. Now — you will have your
chance of saying what you want to say
presently. Have you anything to ask
the officer?

JONES [sullenly]. No.

MAGISTRATE. Very well then. Now
let us hear what the female prisoner has
to say first.

MRS. JONES. Well, your Worship,
of course I can only say what I've said
all along, that I didn't take the box.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, but did you know
that it was taken?

MRS. JONES. No, your Worship.
And, of course, to what my husband
says, your Worship, I can't speak of my
own knowledge. Of course, I know that
he came home very late on the Monday
night. It was past one o'clock when
he came in, and he was not himself
at all.

MAGISTRATE. Had he been drinking?

MRS. JONES. Yes, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE. And was he drunk?

MRS. JONES. Yes, your Worship, he
was almost quite drunk.

MAGISTRATE. And did he say anything to you?

MRS. JONES. No, your Worship, only to call me names. And of course in the morning when I got up and went to work he was asleep. And I don't know anything more about it until I came home again. Except that Mr. Barthwick — that's my employer, your Worship — told me the box was missing.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes.

MRS. JONES. But of course when I was shaking out my husband's coat the cigarette-box fell out and all the cigarettes were scattered on the bed.

MAGISTRATE. You say all the cigarettes were scattered on the bed? [*To SNOW*] Did you see the cigarettes scattered on the bed?

SNOW. No, your Worship, I did not.

MAGISTRATE. You see he says he didn't see them.

JONES. Well, they were there for all that.

SNOW. I can't say, your Worship, that I had the opportunity of going round the room; I had all my work cut out with the male prisoner.

MAGISTRATE. [*To MRS. JONES*] Well, what more have you to say?

MRS. JONES. Of course when I saw the box, your Worship, I was dreadfully upset, and I couldn't think why he had done such a thing; when the officer came we were having words about it, because it is ruin to me, your Worship, in my profession, and I have three little children dependent on me.

MAGISTRATE [*protruding his neck*]. Yes — yes — but what did he say to you?

MRS. JONES. I asked him whatever came over him to do such a thing — and he said it was the drink. He said he had had too much to drink, and something came over him. And of course, your Worship, he had had very little to eat all day, and the drink does go to the head when you have not had enough to eat. Your Worship may not know, but it is the truth. And I would like to say that all through his married life, I have never known him to do such a thing before, though we have passed through great hardships and [*speaking with soft emphasis*] I am quite sure he would not have done it if he had been himself at the time.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes. But don't you know that that is no excuse?

MRS. JONES. Yes, your I know that it is no excuse.

[*The MAGISTRATE leans and parleys with his CLERK*]

JACK [*leaning over from his hind*]. I say, Dad —

BARTHWICK. Tsst! [*Shells mouth he speaks to ROGER*] I had better get up now and considering the circumstances poverty of the prisoners, we wish to proceed any further, a magistrate would deal with the one of disorder only on the part

BALD CONSTABLE. Hssshh!

[*ROGER shakes*]

MAGISTRATE. Now, suppose you say and what your husband is true, what I have to consider how did he obtain access to the and were you in any way a part obtaining access? You are a woman employed at the house

MRS. JONES. Yes, your and of course if I had let him house it would have been very of me; and I have never done anything in any of the houses where been employed.

MAGISTRATE. Well — so now let us hear what story the prisoner makes of it.

JONES [*who leans with his arm on the dock behind, speaks in a slow voice*]. Wot I say is wot my voice. I've never been 'ad up in a police before, an' I can prove I took in liquor. I told her, and she you the same, that I was going to put the thing into the water soon 'ave it on my mind.

MAGISTRATE. But how did it get into the house?

JONES. I was passin'. I was 'ome from the "Goat and Bell"

MAGISTRATE. The "Goat and Bell" — what is that? A public-house?

JONES. Yes, at the corner. Bank 'oliday, an' I'd 'ad a drop. I see this young Mr. Barthwick to find the keyhole on the wall of the door.

MAGISTRATE. Well?

JONES [*slowly and with many sobs*]. Well — I 'elped 'im to find it as a lord 'e was. He goes on, and back again, and says, "I've got for you," 'e says, "but come in and drink." So I went in just as you 'ave done yourself. We 'ad a whisky just as you might have

Mr. Barthwick says to me, a drink 'nd a smoke. Take you like," 'e says. And then to sleep on the sofa. I 'ad 'ere whisky — an' I 'ad a smoke 'ad some more whisky — an' tell yer what 'appened after

STRATE. Do you mean to say I were so drunk that you can 'er nothing?

[*softly to his father*]. I say, exactly what —

WICK. Tssh!

That's what I do mean.

STRATE. And yet you say you 'ave the box?

I never stole the box. I

STRATE [*hissing with protruded lips*]. You did not steal it — you 'ave it. Did it belong to you — what 'ere stealing?

I took it.

STRATE. You took it — you 'ave it away from their house and you 'ave it to your house —

[*sullenly breaking in*]. I ain't 'ave it.

STRATE. Very well, let us hear what your young man Mr. — Mr. — has to say to your story.

Now leaves the witness-box. The

BALD CONSTABLE beckons JACK, who, clutching his hat, goes into the witness-box. ROPER moves to the table set apart for his profession]

RING CLERK. The evidence you give in the court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God. Kiss the book.

[*The book is kissed*]
[*examining*]. What is your

[*in a low voice*]. John Barthwick, junior.

[*The CLERK writes it down*]
s. Where do you live?

At 6, Rockingham Gate.

All his answers are recorded by the CLERK]

s. You are the son of the

[*in a very low voice*]. Yes.

s. Speak up, please. Do you know the prisoners?

[*looking at the JONESES, in a low voice*]. I've seen Mrs. Jones. I — [*in a low voice*] don't know the man.

Well, I know you!

BALD CONSTABLE. Hssh!

ROPER. Now, did you come in late on the night of Easter Monday?

JACK. Yes.

ROPER. And did you by mistake leave your latch-key in the door?

JACK. Yes.

MAGISTRATE. Oh! You left your latch-key in the door?

ROPER. And is that all you can remember about your coming in?

JACK [*in a loud voice*]. Yes, it is.

MAGISTRATE. Now, you have heard the male prisoner's story, what do you say to that?

JACK [*turning to the MAGISTRATE, speaks suddenly in a confident, straightforward voice*]. The fact of the matter is, sir, that I'd been out to the theatre that night, and had supper afterwards, and I came in late.

MAGISTRATE. Do you remember this man being outside when you came in?

JACK. No, sir. [*He hesitates*] I don't think I do.

MAGISTRATE [*somewhat puzzled*]. Well, did he help you to open the door, as he says? Did any one help you to open the door?

JACK. No, sir — I don't think so, sir — I don't know.

MAGISTRATE. You don't know? But you must know. It isn't a usual thing for you to have the door opened for you, is it?

JACK [*with a shamefaced smile*]. No.

MAGISTRATE. Very well, then —

JACK [*desperately*]. The fact of the matter is, sir, I'm afraid I'd had too much champagne that night.

MAGISTRATE [*smiling*]. Oh! you'd had too much champagne?

JONES. May I ask the gentleman a question?

MAGISTRATE. Yes — yes — you may ask him what questions you like.

JONES. Don't you remember you said you was a Liberal, same as your father, and you asked me wot I was?

JACK [*with his hand against his brow*]. I seem to remember —

JONES. And I said to you, "I'm a bloomin' Conservative," I said; an' you said to me, "You look more like one of these 'ere Socialists. Take wotever you like," you said.

JACK [*with sudden resolution*]. No, I don't. I don't remember anything of the sort.

JONES. Well, I do, an' my word's as good as yours. I've never been had

up in a police court before. Look 'ere, don't you remember you had a sky-blue bag in your 'and —

[BARTHWICK jumps]

ROPER. I submit to your Worship that these questions are hardly to the point, the prisoner having admitted that he himself does not remember anything. *[There is a smile on the face of Justice]* It is a case of the blind leading the blind.

JONES *[violently]*. I've done no more than wot he 'as. I'm a poor man; I've got no money an' no friends — he's a toff — he can do wot I can't.

MAGISTRATE. Now, now! All this won't help you — you must be quiet. You say you took this box? Now, what made you take it? Were you pressed for money?

JONES. I'm always pressed for money.

MAGISTRATE. Was that the reason you took it?

JONES. No.

MAGISTRATE. *[To SNOW]* Was anything found on him?

SNOW. Yes, your Worship. There was six pounds twelve shillin's found on him, and this purse.

[The red silk purse is handed to the MAGISTRATE. BARTHWICK rises in his seat, but hastily sits down again]

MAGISTRATE *[staring at the purse]*. Yes, yes — let me see — *[There is a silence]* No, no, I've nothing before me as to the purse. How did you come by all that money?

JONES *[after a long pause, suddenly]*. I declines to say.

MAGISTRATE. But if you had all that money, what made you take this box?

JONES. I took it out of spite.

MAGISTRATE *[hissing, with protruded neck]*. You took it out of spite? Well now, that's something! But do you imagine you can go about the town taking things out of spite?

JONES. If you had my life, if you'd been out of work —

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes; I know — because you're out of work you think it's an excuse for everything.

JONES *[pointing at JACK]*. You ask 'im wot made 'im take the —

ROPER *[quietly]*. Does your Worship require this witness in the box any longer?

MAGISTRATE *[ironically]*. I think not; he is hardly profitable.

[JACK leaves the witness-box hanging his head, resting on his seat]

JONES. You ask 'im wot made 'im take the lady's —

[But the BALD CONSTABLE takes him by the sleeve]

BALD CONSTABLE. Sssh!

MAGISTRATE *[emphatically]*. Listen to me. I've nothing to say what he may or may not have done. Why did you resist the police in the execution of their duty?

JONES. It war n't their duty to take my wife, a respectable woman, 'adn't done nothing.

MAGISTRATE. But I say to you. What made you strike the constable a blow?

JONES. Any man would do it 'im a blow. I'd strike 'im a blow if I would.

MAGISTRATE. You are not to use your case any better by violence. Do you suppose we could get on if every body behaved like you?

JONES *[leaning forward, excited]*. Well, wot about 'er; who's to take 'er for this? Who's to give 'er good name?

MRS. JONES. Your Worship, my children that's preying on him because of course I've lost my home. And I've had to find another room to live in, to the scandal.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes, I know, but if he hadn't acted like this he would have suffered.

JONES *[glaring round at JACK]*. I've done no worse than wot 'e 'as. I want to know is wot's goin' to be done to 'im.

[The BALD CONSTABLE looks at JACK and says "Hssh!"]

ROPER. Mr. Barthwick is well known, your Worship, that corner of the poverty of the prisoners he has pressed the charge as to the box. Your Worship would deal with him as one of disorder.

JONES. I don't want it sent to the workhouse, I want it all dealt with fair — my rights —

MAGISTRATE *[rapping his desk]*. You have said all you have to say, and you will be quiet. *[There is a silence; the MAGISTRATE bends and parleys with his CLERK]* Yes, I may discharge the woman, but in a kindly voice he addresses MRS. JONES who stands unmoving with her

on the rail] It is very unfortunate for you that this man has behaved as. It is not the consequences to at the consequences to you. You been brought here twice, you have our work — [He glares at JONES] is is what always happens. Now may go away, and I am very sorry necessary to bring you here at all. JONES [softly]. Thank you very your Worship.

[She leaves the dock, and looking back at JONES, twists her fingers and is still]

MAGISTRATE. Yes, yes, but I can't over. Go away, there's a good. [MRS. JONES stands back. The TRATE leans his head on his hand: ising it he speaks to JONES] Now, to me. Do you wish the case to led here, or do you wish it to go a jury?

JONES [muttering]. I don't want no

MAGISTRATE. Very well then, I will with it here. [After a pause] You pleaded guilty to stealing this

JONES. Not to stealin' —

BALD CONSTABLE. Hssshh!

MAGISTRATE. And to assaulting the

JONES. Any man as was a man —

MAGISTRATE. Your conduct here been most improper. You give excuse that you were drunk when ble the box. I tell you that is no. If you choose to get drunk and the law afterwards you must take consequences. And let me tell you men like you, who get drunk and ay to your spite or whatever it is

that's in you, are — are — a nuisance to the community.

JACK [leaning from his seat]. Dad! that's what you said to me!

BARTHWICK. Tsst!

[There is a silence, while the MAGISTRATE consults his CLERK;

JONES leans forward waiting]

MAGISTRATE. This is your first offence, and I am going to give you a light sentence. [Speaking sharply, but without expression] One month with hard labour.

[He bends, and parleys with his

CLERK. The BALD CONSTABLE and another help JONES from the dock]

JONES [stopping and twisting round]. Call this justice? What about 'im? 'E got drunk! 'E took the purse — 'e took the purse but [in a muffled shout] it's 'is money got 'im off — Justice!

[The prisoner's door is shut on JONES, and from the seedy-looking men and women comes a hoarse and whispering groan]

MAGISTRATE. We will now adjourn for lunch! [He rises from his seat]

[The Court is in a stir. ROPER gets up and speaks to the reporter. JACK, throwing up his head, walks with a swagger to the corridor; BARTHWICK follows]

MRS. JONES [turning to him with a humble gesture]. Oh! sir! —

[BARTHWICK hesitates, then yielding to his nerves, he makes a shame-faced gesture of refusal, and hurries out of court. MRS. JONES stands looking after him]

[The curtain falls]

THE CASSILIS ENGAGEMENT

(1907)

BY ST. JOHN HANKIN

ST. JOHN EMILE CLAVERING HANKIN

(1869-1909)

"New Drama" sought, not only to express itself through a new form, but to give itself a new code of morals. This new code was in no way over-emotional, but was marked by a common sense which placed the social fact above any startling emotion on the part of the playwright, and which centered the interest more on the intellectual side of a thesis stated, than on the side of any great passion or partisanship. Of course, this "New Drama" varied in accord with the temperaments of the dramatists; the difference between them is one of degree rather than one of kind. The consequence is, during the experimental period, when the English dramatic renaissance was fighting for its very existence, it was indeed fortunate to have men of independent means, like St. John Hankin, were able to stand against the odds, and fight for those principles which were to bring back into the theatre its old interest in true criticism of life.

John Hankin possessed the common sense which is characteristic of Shaw. He likewise had some of that intellectual wit which is a large part of Shaw. He stood midway between Oscar Wilde and Shaw, possessing characteristics in common with both, and yet differing from them through difference in personality. For, as the critic has pointed out, Hankin's wit is not as reckless as that of Wilde, and his moral conscience is not pledged, as Shaw's conscience is, to propaganda utterance. A difference which distinguishes him from both Shaw and Wilde is this — whereas his wit reveals him as deeply analytical of human nature, he always does so in such manner that what he makes his characters say is in thorough consonance with what they would say under given conditions. Oscar Wilde uttered statements that any of his characters could have made. In other words, he spoke the brilliancy of Oscar Wilde. Shaw has his characters make social statements which are his own social beliefs. But Hankin is true to his characters; and just, indeed, that one sometimes doubts whether he has any real feeling for them. One cannot help but believe that in Galworthy's "Justice", the judiciousness in stating the case is detrimental to the emotional value of the piece for its audience. He is eminently fair in his solution, but emotion and passion presuppose sympathy which is not one of the predominating characteristics of the "New Drama". Stanley Houghton's "Hindle Wakes", J. O. Francis's "Change" — the play of Syndicalism — Githa Sowerby's "Rutherford and Son" — all of these are more or less predominantly intellectual, and reach out for a new code of

John Hankin was born of Cornish stock, in Southampton, on September 25, 1869. His father was a school-teacher. His mother had an independent fortune. When he was fourteen, he entered Malvern College with a scholarship, and three years afterwards won a post-mastership at Merton College, Oxford. His university career is marked by a continued succession of honours in the classics. After

graduating, he entered journalism in London, and contributed many papers to the *Saturday Review*. By the year 1894, he was in India, on the staff of the *Daily News*, Calcutta; but malaria drove him home within a year, and associated himself with the *London Times*, writing dramatic criticism and miscellaneous articles. He was often a contributor to *Punch*, and, in 1901, he published *Punch's Dramatic Sequels*, writing supplementary acts to the classics. This was followed, in 1904, by "Lost Masterpieces", in which he parodied famous plays. This clever literary feat of continuing a story beyond the author's intention was applied to himself in the "Introduction" to three of his plays, supposed to have been marred through their lack of "happy endings."

His first play, "The Two Mr. Wetherbys", was given by The London Stage Society, on February 3, 1903. Evidently Hankin put much of himself into writing, for we are told that the strain of journalistic work made him decide to retire, in 1904, to Campden, Gloucestershire, where he busied himself with translating Bricux's "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont", given by The Stage Society in 1905, and by writing an original comedy, "The Return of the Prodigal", given by Vedrenne and Barker, on September 26, 1905. "The Charity that Binds" and "The Cassilis Engagement" were produced during the seasons of 1907, by The London Stage Society, and thereafter became dramas in the repertories of houses of Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow. His "The Last of the De Mores" is described as "merciless realism", was given by The Stage Society in December, 1908. In addition to these, there are two one-act plays, "The Burglar who was Caught" (1908), and "The Constant Lover" (1912), to his credit. This list represents the dramatic activities of St. John Hankin as a playwright.

His ill-health continued, and in 1907 he developed neurasthenia. It was at the baths of Llandrindod Wells that he drowned himself in the river Iddon on June 15, 1909. A three-act drama, entitled "Thompson", was left incomplete. It was finished by George Calderon, and produced in 1913.

We have selected for inclusion in the present collection "The Cassilis Engagement" as representative of Hankin in most of the characteristics which mark the majority of his plays. The reader is recommended to the introductory essay by John Drinkwater, in the definitive edition of St. John Hankin's Works. The more enlightening even than what Drinkwater has to say are the several criticisms which are included in the third volume of the plays. These not only give an attitude toward his own work, but likewise toward the progressive theatre movement, of which he was such a necessary and healthy part.

In Hankin's "A Note on Happy Endings", defending the sane and sane attitude of *Mrs. Cassilis* toward the engagement, he claims:

So the engagement was broken off and any one who does not realise that it was a "happy ending" for all parties must be perfectly imbecile. But it is to judge my play as a piece of real life and not as the plot of a comedy, that is an intellectual feat which seems to be beyond the capacity of the average critic. By him therefore the breaking off of the Cassilis Engagement instead of being welcomed as matter for rejoicing, was received with much tears and curses. Our dramatic critics when they enter a theatre seldom leave all sense of reality outside and judge what they see there by some artificial standard which they would never dream of applying to the facts of themselves or their friends. To them all engagements are satisfactory

marriages are made in Heaven, and at the mere thought of wedding bells dodder like romantic old women in an almshouse. No wonder they reduced our drama to the last stage of intellectual decrepitude.

, with his usual interest in what happens after it is all over, Hankin adds act to his play when he writes:

Geoffrey Cassilis married *Mabel* to the delight of their respective mothers of the whole county, and unless they break their necks in the hunting field ng seems likely to interrupt the even tenor of their happiness. They live at Deynham in that little house on the edge of the Park the prospect which so appalled *Ethel Borridge*, and there is now a little *Geoffrey* to y in the footsteps of his fond father. I only hope when he is grown-up n his turn falls in love with the inevitable chorus girl, his grandmother will ve to save him from the consequences of his folly. For I doubt if she ver dared to tell *Mabel* or *Geoffrey* her secret for dealing with romantic hments of this kind. *Ethel Borridge* married *Lord Buckfastleigh* as as he became a widower — and worried that venerable nobleman into rave in six months. So she also “ended happily.”

his, one can see what is meant when St. John Hankin is accused of having passing interest in his characters, — in being completely through with them s play is finished, and in failing to awaken in his audience any deeper emotion est than one would feel in being party to a situation between people one t know or have much concern about.

there is great artistry in Hankin's delineation of character, even though a tendency on his part to lose interest in his invention, and to resort to very nplace solutions and very old-fashioned means of bringing his plays to an The Two Mr. Wotherbys” is an illustration of this.

plays, read in succession, will show an increasing development on Hankin's They grow by accumulation of good qualities, rather than by any distinct ation of workmanship. It is futile to argue what advance Hankin would ade had he lived. We can only say that what he did do was of inestimable in the advance of the “New Drama”, and showed an increasing surety in ue. What keeps them from an assured place in the future is their lack of eity, which real wit should have, and their lack of passion, which is at the all human life.

THE CASSILIS ENGAGEMENT

A COMEDY FOR MOTHERS

By ST. JOHN HANKIN

CHARACTERS

Presented at the Imperial Theatre, London, by the Stage Society, under the directorship of Miss Madge McIntosh, February 10, 1907.

MRS. CASSILIS		Miss Evelyn Wee
GEOFFREY CASSILIS	<i>her son</i>	Mr. Langhorne B
LADY MARCHMONT	<i>her sister</i>	Miss Gertrude Bu
THE COUNTESS OF REMENHAM		Miss Florence Ha
MAJOR WARRINGTON	<i>her brother</i>	Mr. Sam Sothern
LADY MABEL VENNING	<i>her daughter</i>	Miss Isabel Rolan
MRS. BORRIDGE		Miss Clare Greet
ETHEL BORRIDGE	<i>her daughter</i>	Miss Maudi Darn
THE REV. HILDEBRAND HERRIES	<i>the Rector</i>	Mr. F. Morland
MRS. HERRIES	<i>his wife</i>	Miss K. M. Rom
WATSON	<i>butler at Deynham</i>	Mr. Ralf Hutton
DORSET	<i>Mrs. Cassilis's</i> <i>maid</i>	Miss Margaret M
TWO FOOTMEN		

The action of the play passes at Deynham Abbey, Mrs. Cassilis's house in Leicestershire, Act I in the Drawing-room, Act II on the Lawn, Act III in the Study, and Act IV in the Morning-room. One night passes between Acts I and II, and between Acts III and IV, one week between Acts II and III.

Note. — The Leicestershire Cassilises pronounce their name as it is spelled.

THE CASSILIS ENGAGEMENT

ACT I

E. — *The white drawing-room at Deynham Abbey, a very handsome room furnished in the Louis Seize style. There are big double doors at the back, and a large tea-table, with teacups, etc., on cloth, stands rather to the left of them. There is a large French window open on the left of the stage, with a sofa in front of it facing the view. On the opposite side of the room is the fireplace, but there is no fire as the month is August. Two or three arm-chairs stand near it. When the curtain rises the RECTOR is standing judiciously on the hearthrug. He seems about to hum a tune, but thinks better of it. MRS. HERRIES is standing by the window. Presently she crosses to her husband, and sits in one of the arm-chairs. The RECTOR is a rubicund, humorous-looking man of fifty; his wife a prosperous-looking lady a few years younger.*

MRS. HERRIES. I wonder what can beeping Mrs. Cassilis?

RECTOR [*back to fire*]. My dear, I think you oughtn't to have called. How sad an occasion —

MRS. HERRIES. My dear Hildebrand, it's just on these sad occasions a visit is so consoling. One should always call after a birth, a funeral —

RECTOR [*showing in LADY REMENHAM her daughter*]. I will tell Mrs. Cassilis you are here, my lady. She will be down in a moment.

LADY REMENHAM. Thank you. How do you do, Mrs. Herries? How do you do, Rector?

[**LADY REMENHAM** goes towards the fireplace and shakes hands. She is a dignified old lady of about sixty. Her normal expression is one of placid self-assurance, but to-day she has the air of disapproving of some-

thing or somebody. **MABEL** is a very pretty girl of two and twenty. **LADY REMENHAM** seats herself comfortably by **MRS. HERRIES**. **MABEL** goes over to the window, where the **RECTOR** joins her]

MRS. HERRIES. How do you do, Lady Remenham?

RECTOR. How do you do, Mabel?

LADY REMENHAM. You've heard this dreadful news, haven't you?

[**RECTOR** makes sympathetic gesture]

MRS. HERRIES. Yes. Poor Mrs. Cassilis.

LADY REMENHAM. Poor Adelaide, indeed! That unhappy boy! But there! How any mother can allow such a thing to happen passes my comprehension. To get engaged!

RECTOR [*nods sympathetically*]. Just so.

LADY REMENHAM. Engagements are such troublesome things. They sometimes even lead to marriage. But we'll hope it won't be as bad as that in this case. You've not heard who she is, I suppose?

MRS. HERRIES [*shaking her head mournfully*]. No.

LADY REMENHAM. Ah! Some one quite impossible, of course. Otherwise Adelaide would have told me in her letter.

MRS. HERRIES. I'm afraid so.

LADY REMENHAM [*irritably*]. It's really extremely wicked of Geoffrey. And so silly, too! — which is worse. A temporary infatuation I could understand, terminated by some small monetary payment. It would have been regrettable, of course, but young men are like that. And Adelaide could have stopped it out of his allowance. But an engagement! I am quite shocked at her.

MABEL [*at window, turning to her mother*]. Don't you think, mamma, we

might leave Mrs. Cassilis to manage her son's affairs her own way?

LADY REMENHAM. She has *not* managed them. That's exactly what I complain of. I can't altogether acquit the Rector of some blame in the matter. He was Geoffrey's tutor for years. They used to say in *my* young days, "Train up a child in the way he should go —"

RECTOR [*attempting a mild jest*]. And when he's grown up he'll give you a great deal of anxiety. So they did! So they did!

LADY REMENHAM [*severely*]. That is not the ending I remember.

RECTOR. That is the Revised Version.

[*Mrs. Herries frowns. She feels this is not a moment for levity*]

LADY REMENHAM. I dare say. They seem to alter everything nowadays. But, if so, I hardly see the use of education.

RECTOR [*obstinately cheerful*]. I have long been of that opinion, Lady Remenham.

[*Mrs. Cassilis, in a charming flutter of apologies, enters at this moment. She is a very pretty woman of forty, tall and graceful, and exquisitely dressed*]

MRS. CASSILIS. You *must* forgive me all of you. I had some letters to finish. [*General handshake. Kiss to MABEL*] Dear Mabel. How do you do, Mrs. Herries?

RECTOR. How do you do, Mrs. Cassilis?

LADY REMENHAM. My dear Adelaide, *what* a charming gown! But you always do have the most delightful clothes. Where do you get them?

MRS. CASSILIS. Clarice made this.

[*Two footmen bring the tea-table down into the middle of the room. The BUTLER, who has brought in a teapot on a salver, places it on the table, and brings up a chair for Mrs. Cassilis. The footmen go out*]

LADY REMENHAM. Clarice? The wretch! She always makes my things atrociously. If only I had your figure!

MRS. CASSILIS. Excuse me, dear. [*To BUTLER*] The carriage has gone to the station to meet Lady Marchmont, Watson?

BUTLER. Yes, madam. It's five minutes ago. [*Exit BUTLER*]

MRS. CASSILIS. [*To LADY REMENHAM*] I'm so glad you like it.

[*Goes to tea-table and seats herself*]

LADY REMENHAM. Is Margaret coming to stay with you?

MRS. CASSILIS. Yes, for ten days.

LADY REMENHAM [*drawing chair to table*]. And now will you please scold my tea? I have come here to scold you, and I shall require sugar-cups.

MRS. CASSILIS [*quite cheerful*]. Scold me? Won't you all bring chairs to the table? [*They all sit down*] Rector, where are you? [*To LADY REMENHAM*] Cream?

LADY REMENHAM. Thank you for a small lump.

MRS. CASSILIS. And why are you being scolded?

LADY REMENHAM. You know me well. [*Sternly*] Adelaide, what I hear about Geoffrey's engagement.

MRS. CASSILIS [*not at all distressed*]. Oh, that? Yes, Geoffrey has engaged to a girl in London. Is that so romantic of him! I know nothing about her except that I believe she has no money, and Geoffrey is head and ears in love with her.

MRS. HERRIES [*blandly*]. My dear Mrs. Cassilis, I should have thought that was quite enough!

MRS. CASSILIS. Rector, will you cut that cake? It's just by your hand.

LADY REMENHAM [*refusing to be diverted from the task of cross-examination*]. Where did he meet her?

MRS. CASSILIS. In an omnibus, of course.

LADY REMENHAM [*scandalised*]. Omnibus!

MRS. CASSILIS. Yes. That was very romantic, too! One of the horses bolted, and she was frightened. I thought she was going to faint. Geoffrey got her out, took charge of her, discovered her address, and took her home. Wasn't it clever of him? Of course she asked him to come in, and he was introduced to her mother. Now they're engaged.

[*Gives cup to Rector*]

LADY REMENHAM [*with awful dignity*]. And what is the name of this person?

MRS. CASSILIS. Borridge.

LADY REMENHAM. Borridge! My love, pray remember if ever

home and inform me that you are engaged to a person of the name of Edge I shall whip you.

[Puts down cup]

MABEL. Very well, mamma.

MRS. CASSILIS. Another cup?

LADY REMENHAM. Thank you. Ever less sugar this time. [Gives cup] I never could understand why you let Geoffrey be in London at all. Alone? Young men ought never to be left out alone at his age. They are so susceptible.

MABEL. Geoffrey has his profession, mamma.

MRS. CASSILIS. Geoffrey's at the university, you know.

LADY REMENHAM. The Bar! What nonsense has Geoffrey to be at the Bar! He has the best shooting in the country, and in the winter there's the best of everything. What more does he want? Disgraceful.

ACTOR [another mild effort at humour].

dear Lady Remenham, you're sure not confusing the Bar with the Bench?

MRS. HERRIES. Hildebrand!

LADY REMENHAM [impatiently]. The Bench is a good enough profession, of course. But only for very younger sons. They will have Deynham some day, twelve thousand a year. I don't think Adelaide need have made a little money of him.

MRS. CASSILIS. Young men must do something, don't you think?

LADY REMENHAM [briskly]. Certainly.

It's this vulgar Radical notion that people ought to do things that is against English Society. What did Mr. Edge do, by the way?

MRS. CASSILIS [hesitates]. He was a book-maker, I believe.

LADY REMENHAM [triumphantly]. See, you see! That's what comes of doing things!

MRS. CASSILIS [slight shrug. Pours herself out more tea, and still quite flustered]. Well, I'm afraid there's no more to be said about it. They're engaged, Miss Borridge is coming down here.

MRS. HERRIES. Coming here!

LADY REMENHAM. Coming here!!!

MRS. CASSILIS. Yes. On a visit. To her mother.

LADY REMENHAM [putting down her glass with a touch of solemnity]. Adelaide are you — excuse my asking the question — are you quite in your right mind?

MRS. CASSILIS [laughing]. I believe so.

LADY REMENHAM. You've noticed nothing? No dizziness about the head? No singing in the ears? [MRS. CASSILIS shakes her head] And yet you ask this young woman to stay with you! And her mother! Neither of whom you know anything whatever about!

MRS. CASSILIS. Another cup?

[LADY REMENHAM shakes her head irritably]

LADY REMENHAM. Is Mr. Borridge — Ugh! — coming too?

MRS. CASSILIS. He is dead, I believe.

LADY REMENHAM. That, at least, is satisfactory.

MABEL. Mamma!

LADY REMENHAM. Mabel, I shall do my duty whatever happens. [Turning to MRS. CASSILIS again] And does Mrs. Borridge carry on the business? I think you said he was a boot-maker?

MABEL. Book-maker.

MRS. CASSILIS [refusing to take offence]. No. I believe he left her some small annuity.

LADY REMENHAM. Annuity? Ah, dies with her, of course?

MRS. CASSILIS. No doubt.

LADY REMENHAM [gasps]. Well, Adelaide, I never should have believed it of you. To ask these people to the house!

MRS. CASSILIS. Why shouldn't I ask them? Geoffrey tells me Ethel is charming.

LADY REMENHAM. Ethel?

MRS. CASSILIS. Miss Borridge.

LADY REMENHAM. Bah!

[Enter BUTLER, showing in another visitor.]

This is LADY MARCHMONT, MRS. CASSILIS's sister. She is a woman of about five-and-forty. She wears a light travelling cloak. She is not unlike MRS. CASSILIS in appearance and manner, but is of a more delicate, fragile type]

BUTLER. Lady Marchmont.

MRS. CASSILIS [rising]. Ah, Margaret. How glad I am to see you. Some more tea, Watson.

LADY MARCHMONT [kisses her]. Not for me, please. No, really. My doctor won't hear of it. Hot water with a little milk is the most he allows me. How do you do, dear? [Shaking hands with the others] How do you do? How do you do?

[BUTLER goes out]

MRS. CASSILIS. How's the General?

LADY MARCHMONT. Very gouty. His temper this morning was atrocious, poor man.

LADY REMENHAM [*shakes her head*]. You bear it like a saint, dear.

LADY MARCHMONT [*philosophically, sitting in arm-chair after laying aside her cloak*]. Yes — I go away a good deal. He finds my absence very soothing. That's why I was so glad to accept Adelaide's invitation when she asked me.

MRS. CASSILIS. My dear, you'll be invaluable. I look to you to help me with my visitors.

LADY REMENHAM. Poor Margaret. But you always were so unselfish.

LADY MARCHMONT. Are they very — ?

LADY REMENHAM. *Very*.

MRS. CASSILIS [*laughing*]. My dear, Lady Remenham knows nothing whatever about them.

LADY REMENHAM [*firmly*]. I know everything about them. The girl has no money. She has no position. She became engaged to Geoffrey without your knowledge. She has a perfectly dreadful mother. And her name is Borridge.

LADY MARCHMONT [*raising her brows*]. When are they coming?

MRS. CASSILIS. I expect them in half an hour. The carriage was to go straight back to the station to meet them.

LADY REMENHAM [*ruffling her feathers angrily*]. I hope Geoffrey is conscious of the folly and wickedness of his conduct.

LADY MARCHMONT. Where is he, dear?

MRS. CASSILIS. He's down here with me — and as happy as possible, I'm glad to say.

LADY REMENHAM. Extraordinary! But the young men of the present day are extraordinary. Young men nowadays seem always to be either irreclaimably vicious or deplorably silly. I prefer them vicious. They give less trouble. My poor brother Algernon — you remember Algernon, don't you, Rector? He was another of your pupils.

RECTOR [*sighs*]. Yes, I remember.

MRS. HERRIES. Major Warrington hasn't been down for quite a long time, has he?

LADY REMENHAM. No. We don't ask him to Milverton now. He comes

to us in London, but in the country has to be more particular. He is dreadfully dissipated. Always coming after some petticoat or other. Often more than one. But the safety in numbers, don't you think?

RECTOR. Unquestionably.

LADY REMENHAM. Algernon says he is by temperament a polygamist. I don't know what he means. However, I've no anxiety about him — he never gets engaged. He's far too good for that. I wonder if he could be got out of this dreadful entanglement. In a case of this kind one should have the very best advice.

MRS. CASSILIS [*laughing*]. I shall be delighted to see Major Warrington — though not for the reason you suggest.

LADY REMENHAM. Well, I'll advise him to come down. Remenham won't like it. He disapproves of him so much. He is quite virtuous about it. But that sort of moral indignation should never be allowed to get out of hand, should it? [RECTOR *nods*] Besides, he's just now. I'll write to Algernon to come directly I get back, and I'll bring him to dinner one day next week — Thursday?

LADY MARCHMONT. Do, dear. I adore Major Warrington.

LADY REMENHAM. I dare say. [RECTOR *paring to go*] He's not your brother. Meantime, I can ask him what he knows anything against Mrs. Borridge. But he's sure to. He knows nearly all the detrimental people in London, especially if their daughters are the least attractive.

MRS. CASSILIS [*smiling*]. You must go with him on Thursday, won't you? And Mabel? [MABEL *entering*]

LADY REMENHAM. Perhaps that would be best. Then I can keep my brother within bounds. Poor Algernon must not take too much champagne. I am there to prevent him. And now, dear, I really must go. [She and Mabel go up towards door] Good-bye.

MRS. CASSILIS. You won't stay to meet Mrs. Borridge?

LADY REMENHAM [*shudders*]. I don't. Thursday will be quite enough. Good-bye, Mrs. Herries. [They reach door] GEOFFREY opens the door almost runs into her arms. Ah, that's the young man who is causing us all this distress.

GEOFFREY. I, Lady Remenham?

hands] How do you do, Aunt
et? [*Shakes hands with others*]
REMENHAM [*shakes hands*]. You.
do you mean by getting engaged
e one we none of us know any-
about?

EL. Mamma!

REMENHAM. I consider your
t perfectly heartless. Its foolish-
eds no comment from me.

FFREY. Really, Lady Remen-

REMENHAM. Tut, tut, sir.
"really" me. I'm ashamed of
And now I'll be off before I
with you. Come, Mabel.

[*Sweeps out, followed by MABEL.*

GOFFREY opens door for them,
and then takes them down to
their carriage]

HERRIES. I think we ought to
g, too. Come, Hildebrand.

[*Shakes hands*]

[*MRS. CASSILIS rings*]

OR. Good-bye, Mrs. Cassilis.
ope everything will turn out for
t.

HERRIES. It never does.
ye.

CASSILIS [*going towards door*
RECTOR]. Good-bye. [*Shakes*

armly] And you'll both come
ne on Thursday, won't you?
row week that is. Major War-
will want to see his old tutor.

OR. You're very good.

[*He and Mrs. HERRIES go out*]

CASSILIS [*returning to her sister*].
Lady Remenham! What non-
he talks.

MARCHMONT. People who talk
h as that must talk a good deal
sense, mustn't they? Otherwise
ave nothing to say.

[*Re-enter GEOFFREY*]

FFREY. Lady Remenham seems

MARCHMONT. About your en-
nt? I'm not surprised.

FFREY. I don't see what it's
do with her.

MARCHMONT. You must make
ee for a mother's feelings, my
eoffrey.

FFREY [*pats MRS. CASSILIS's*
then goes to tea-table and helps
to tea]. Lady Remenham isn't
ther. She's my god-mother.

MARCHMONT. She's Mabel's

MRS. CASSILIS. Sh! Margaret.

LADY MARCHMONT. My dear, there's
no use making mysteries about things.
Geoffrey was always supposed to be
going to marry Mabel ever since they
were children. He knows that.

GEOFFREY. That was only boy and
girl talk.

LADY MARCHMONT. For you, per-
haps.

GEOFFREY. And for her. Mabel
never expected —

[*Pause. He thinks*]

LADY MARCHMONT. Did you ever
ask her?

GEOFFREY. But I never sup-
posed —

LADY MARCHMONT. I think you
should have supposed. A boy should
be very careful how he encourages a
girl to think of him in that way.

GEOFFREY. But I'd no idea. Of
course, I like Mabel. I like her aw-
fully. We're like brother and sister.
But beyond that — [*Pause*] Mother,
do you think I've behaved badly to
Mabel?

MRS. CASSILIS [*gently*]. I think per-
haps you've a little disappointed her.

GEOFFREY [*peevishly*]. Why didn't
somebody tell me? How was I to
know?

LADY MARCHMONT. My dear boy,
we couldn't be expected to know you
were absolutely blind.

MRS. CASSILIS. Margaret, you're
not to scold Geoffrey. I won't allow it.

GEOFFREY. Mother, dear — you
won't allow this to make any differ-
ence? With Ethel, I mean?

MRS. CASSILIS. Of course not, Geoff.

[*Lays hand on his*]

GEOFFREY [*earnestly*]. She's so fond
of me. And I'm so fond of her. We
were made for each other. I couldn't
bear it if you were unkind to her.

MRS. CASSILIS. My dear Geoff, I'm
sure Ethel is everything that is sweet
and good, or my boy wouldn't love her.
And I intend to fall in love with her
myself directly I set eyes on her.

GEOFFREY. Dear mother! [*Pats her*
hand affectionately. Pause; then,
thoughtfully] I'm afraid you'll find her
mother rather trying — at first. She's
not quite a lady, you know. . . . But
she's very good-natured.

MRS. CASSILIS [*cheerfully*]. Well,
well, we shall see. And now run away,
dear, and leave me to talk to Margaret,
and I'll undertake that all symptoms of

crossness shall have disappeared before our visitors arrive.

GEOFFREY. All right, mother.

[*Kisses her and goes out*]

LADY MARCHMONT [*looking after him reflectively*]. How you spoil that boy!

MRS. CASSILIS [*lightly*]. What else should I do with him? He's my only one. Mothers always spoil their sons, don't they? And quarrel with their daughters. More marriages are due to girls being unhappy at home than most people imagine.

LADY MARCHMONT. And yet Geoffrey wants to leave you, apparently.

MRS. CASSILIS [*smiling bravely; but her eyes have a suspicion of moisture in them*]. Evidently I didn't spoil him enough.

LADY MARCHMONT [*washing her hands of the whole affair*]. Well, I'm glad you're pleased with this engagement.

MRS. CASSILIS [*sudden change of manner. Her face loses its brightness, and she suddenly seems to look older*]. Pleased with it! Do you really believe that?

LADY MARCHMONT. Didn't you say so?

MRS. CASSILIS [*shrugs*]. To Lady Remenham and Mrs. Herries. Yes.

LADY MARCHMONT. And to Geoffrey.

MRS. CASSILIS. And Geoffrey too. [*Half to herself*] Mothers can't always be straightforward with their sons, can they?

LADY MARCHMONT. Why not?

[*There is a pause while Mrs. Cassilis makes up her mind whether to answer this or not. Then she seems to decide to speak out. She moves nearer to her sister, and when she begins her voice is very firm and matter-of-fact*]

MRS. CASSILIS. My dear Margaret, what would you do if your son suddenly wrote to you that he had become engaged to a girl you knew nothing whatever about, a girl far beneath him in social rank?

LADY MARCHMONT [*firmly*]. I should have forbidden the engagement. Forbidden it absolutely.

MRS. CASSILIS. Without seeing the girl?

LADY MARCHMONT. Certainly. The mere fact of her accepting my son before I had ever set eyes on her would have been quite enough.

MRS. CASSILIS. But supposing son were of age and independent?

LADY MARCHMONT [*impatiently*]. Geoffrey isn't independent.

MRS. CASSILIS. He has fifty hundred a year.

LADY MARCHMONT [*contemptuously*]. What's that?

MRS. CASSILIS. Besides, I know I should always be willing to help him.

LADY MARCHMONT. That's all. He ought not to have known I ought to have made it clear to him the first that if he married without your consent he would never get a penny from you, either now or hereafter. Deynham isn't entailed naturally.

MRS. CASSILIS. But, my dear, I couldn't disinherit Geoffrey! Could I?

LADY MARCHMONT [*shrugs*]. He could have threatened to. And the girl wouldn't have accepted.

MRS. CASSILIS. I don't know. [*Thoughtfully*] Five hundred pounds may seem a considerable sum to you.

LADY MARCHMONT [*horrified*]. That's as bad as that?

MRS. CASSILIS [*trying to smile*]. Besides, she may be really in love with him.

LADY MARCHMONT [*snappish*]. What has that to do with it?

MRS. CASSILIS. Young people are in love. They are seldom prudent about their money.

LADY MARCHMONT. Still, I should have forbidden the engagement.

MRS. CASSILIS. And then?

LADY MARCHMONT. What else could I mean?

MRS. CASSILIS. If Geoffrey had refused me? Boys can be very obstinate.

LADY MARCHMONT. I should have refused ever to see him again.

MRS. CASSILIS. Ah, Margaret, I couldn't do that. Geoffrey is the only thing I have. He is my only joy and my pride. I couldn't let him go with him whatever happened. MARCHMONT *leans back with great impatience*. No, Margaret, that was the best.

LADY MARCHMONT. What plan?

MRS. CASSILIS [*quite practical*]. My plan is to give the thing a fair trial. Ask her down here. Ask her to stay down here. And see what happens.

MARCHMONT *[looking at her]*. Nothing else?

CASSILIS. Nothing else — at

MARCHMONT. You could have that without sanctioning the engagement.

CASSILIS. Yes. But love is on opposition. There's a fasci- about a runaway match. It has e. Whereas there's no romance about an ordinary wedding. It's ill and rather vulgar. *[Wearily]* After all, the girl may be present-

MARCHMONT. Borridge! I'm not very sanguine about

CASSILIS. Anyhow, she's pretty, Geoffrey loves her. That's all we about her at present.

MARCHMONT. Wretched boy. Ask he should have allowed him- self to be caught in this way! . . . Don't think you might have asked the mother without the mother?

CASSILIS. So Geoffrey sug- gested. He seemed rather nervous having her here. She's rather a plain person, I gather. But I said we were marrying into the family and it isn't unkind to her. *[With a smile]* Poor boy, he rather d d at that. I think he hadn't met Mrs. Borridge with his social schemes. It's just as well he could do so at once, don't you

MR. BORRIDGE. Mrs. and Miss Borridge.

MRS. BORRIDGE and ETHEL. Both rise. LADY MARCHMONT turns round to look at the newcomers. MRS. CASSILIS goes up to meet them with her sweetest smile. Nothing could be more hospitable than her manner or more gracious than her welcome. The change from the MRS. CASSILIS of a moment before, with her resolute set of the lips and the glitter in the eyes, to this gentle, pressing creature does the greatest credit to her powers of self-control. LADY MARCHMONT notices it, and is a little shocked]

CASSILIS. How do you do? How do you do, my dear? *[Kisses]* Tell Mr. Geoffrey, Watson. You've not had a tiring journey, Borridge? *[Exit BUTLER]*

MRS. BORRIDGE. Not at all, Mrs. Cassilis. We 'ad — had — the compartment to ourselves, bein' first-class. As I says to my girly, "They'll very likely send the carriage to meet us, and it looks better for the servants."

[MRS. BORRIDGE comes down stage. She is a large, gross woman, rather over-dressed in inexpensive materials. Too much colour in her hat and far too much in her cheeks. But a beaming, good-natured harridan for all that. As a landlady you would rather like her. She smiles nervously in LADY MARCHMONT'S direction, not sure whether she ought to say anything or wait to be introduced. Her daughter keeps by her side, watching to see she doesn't commit herself, and quite sure that she will. ETHEL is pretty but second-rate; she has had the sense to dress simply, and therefore is less appallingly out of the picture than her far more amiable mother]

MRS. CASSILIS. Let me introduce you. Mrs. Borridge — Lady Marchmont, Miss Borridge.

[LADY MARCHMONT bows]

MRS. BORRIDGE *[extends gloved hand]*. How do you do, Lady Marchmont? Proud, I'm sure.

[LADY MARCHMONT finds nothing to say, and for the moment there is a constrained pause. Then enter GEOFFREY hurriedly]

GEOFFREY *[with as much heartiness as he can muster, but it rings a little hollow]*. How do you do, Mrs. Borridge? Ethel, dear, how long have you been here? I didn't hear you come. *[Kisses her]*

ETHEL. We've only just got here.

MRS. BORRIDGE *[subsiding into an arm-chair]*. Don't apologise, Geoffy. Your ma's been entertaining us most kind.

GEOFFREY *[with look of gratitude to MRS. CASSILIS]*. Dear mother.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Well, how are you, Geoffy? You look first-rate.

GEOFFREY. Oh, I'm all right.

MRS. BORRIDGE. And what a fine 'ouse — house — you've got! Quite a palace, I declare!

GEOFFREY. I'm glad you like it.

MRS. BORRIDGE. And it'll all be yours some day. Won't it?

ETHEL *[pulls her sleeve]*. Mother!

GEOFFREY. That's as my mother decides.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Then you're sure to 'ave it. I know what mothers are! And what a 'andsome room, too. Quite like the Metropole at Brighton.

[Enter MRS. CASSILIS's maid. She is in a perfectly plain black dress, and looks enormously more like a lady than ETHEL]

MAID. Can I have your keys, madam?

MRS. BORRIDGE [surprised]. My keys?

MAID. The keys of your trunks, madam.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Certainly not. Who ever 'eard of such a thing?

MAID. I thought you might wish me to unpack for you, madam.

MRS. BORRIDGE [bristling]. Oh. Did you! I don't want no strange girls ferreting in my boxes. [ETHEL nudges her arm] What is it, Eth? Oh, very well. But I'm not going to let her, all the same. No, thank you.

MRS. CASSILIS [quite self-possessed. LADY MARCHMONT nervously avoids her eye]. Mrs. Borridge will unpack for herself, Dorset. [MAID bows, and turns to go out] Wait a moment. [MAID pauses at door] Would you like to take off your things at once, Mrs. Borridge? If so, Dorset shall show you your room. And I'll have some tea sent up to you there. You'll want it after your journey. [Feels teapot] This is quite cold. What do you say, Ethel?

ETHEL. Thank you, Mrs. Cassilis. A cup of tea would be very nice.

MRS. CASSILIS. Show Mrs. Borridge her room, Dorset. [MRS. BORRIDGE rises] And take her up some tea. Dinner will be at eight. You'll ring if there's anything you want, won't you?

MRS. BORRIDGE. Thank you, Mrs. Cassilis.

[MRS. BORRIDGE waddles out, beaming. She feels that her first introduction to the houses of the great has gone off successfully. GEOFFREY holds the door open for them, and gives ETHEL a sly kiss in passing. MRS. CASSILIS makes no sign, but one can feel her shudder at the sound. GEOFFREY comes down to her a moment later, brimming with enthusiasm]

GEOFFREY. Well, mother, you think of her? Isn't she su-

MRS. CASSILIS [gently]. She's pretty, Geoff. [Lays hand on his arm]

GEOFFREY. And good! You know how good she is!

MRS. CASSILIS. So long good to my boy that's all I ask.

GEOFFREY. Dearest mother, her demonstratively] Now I'll dress.

[Goes out quickly, with feeling that he has been too demonstrative for a Englishman. There is a pause, during which MARCHMONT looks at MRS. CASSILIS at nothing. The latter is evidently in deep thought and seems to have almost forgotten her sister's presence. Last LADY MARCHMONT with the stern accent of the north says "you so"]

LADY MARCHMONT. And tell your son is to marry.

MRS. CASSILIS. Marry her sense, my dear Margaret.

[The curtain falls]

ACT II

SCENE. — The lawn at Deynham after breakfast the following morning. Under a tree stand two or three wicker chairs, with bright cushions. On the right side of the house, with windows open, is a terrace. A path on the left leads to the flower garden, and another on the same side to the strawberrie garden. When the curtain rises, MRS. CASSILIS comes on to the terrace, followed by ETHEL, and a little later MRS. BORRIDGE. The latter is flushed with food, and gaily arrayed in a green silk blouse. She is obviously in the best of spirits, and is generally terribly at ease.

MRS. CASSILIS. Shall we go for a walk on the lawn? It's such a fine morning.

ETHEL. That will be joyful. MRS. CASSILIS. [They come down] Very well, in the country I shall always have much breakfast and then sleep in the morning on a long chair digress. So will mother.

S. BORRIDGE. How you go on, !
S. CASSILIS. Try this chair, then.
[*By moving long chair forward*]
BorrIDGE, what kind of chair do
ce?

S. BORRIDGE. This'll do. I'm
particular. [*Subsides into another
chair*] Am I showing my ankles,

EL. Sh! mother! [*Giggles*]

S. BORRIDGE. Well, I only asked,

S. CASSILIS. I wonder if you'd
cushion for your head? Try

[*Puts vivid red cushion behind
Mrs. BORRIDGE's vivid green
blouse. The effect is electrify-
ing*]

S. BORRIDGE. That's better.

[*Mrs. CASSILIS sinks negligently
in wicker chair and puts up
white lace parasol*]

EL [*sigh of content*]. I call this
n, Mrs. Cassilis.

S. CASSILIS. That's right, my
Are you fond of the country?

EL. I don't know. I've never
there so far. Not to the real
y, I mean. Mums and I have
k at Brighton now and then.
nce we went for a month to Broad-
after I had the measles. But
not exactly country, is it?

S. CASSILIS. You're sure to like
Geoffrey loves it. He's never so
as when he's pottering about
ham with his gun.

EL. Doesn't he get tired of that?

S. CASSILIS. Oh no. Besides, he
t do that all the year round. He
a great deal. We've very good
ag at Deynham. Are you fond of

?

EL. I can't bear them, Mrs.
is.

S. BORRIDGE. When she was a
tot her father put 'er — her — on
y and she fell off. It didn't hurt
ut the doctor said 'er nerve was
. And now she can't bear 'orses.

S. CASSILIS. What a pity! I do
you won't be dull while you're
is. Perhaps you're fond of walk-

EL. Yes. I don't mind walking
a little. If there's anything to
o.

S. CASSILIS. We often walk up
erton Hill on fine afternoons to see

the view. It's the highest point about
here.

ETHEL [*stifling a yawn*]. Is it, Mrs.
Cassilis?

MRS. CASSILIS. And no doubt we
shall find other things to amuse you.
What do you like?

ETHEL. Oh, shops and theatres, and
lunching at restaurants and dancing,
and, oh, lots of things.

MRS. CASSILIS. I'm afraid we've no
shops nearer than Leicester, and that's
twelve miles away. And we've no
restaurants at all. But I dare say we
could get up a dance for you.

ETHEL [*clapping her hands*]. That'll
be sweet! I simply love dancing.
And all the rest of the time I shall sit
on the lawn and grow fat, like mummy.
[*Protest from Mrs. BORRIDGE*] Oh yes,
I shall.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Ethel, don't be
saucy.

ETHEL [*laughing*]. Mummy, if you
scold me you'll have to go in. It's far
too hot to be scolded.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Isn't she a spoilt
girl, Mrs. Cassilis? What they taught
you at that boarding school, miss, I
don't know. Not manners, I can see.

ETHEL [*ruffling her mother's wig*].
There! there! mums. Was 'em's cross?

MRS. BORRIDGE [*pettishly*]. Stop it,
Ethel, stop it, I say. Whatever will
Mrs. Cassilis think of you!

MRS. CASSILIS [*smiling sweetly*].
Don't scold her, Mrs. BorrIDGE. It's
so pleasant to see a little high spirits,
isn't it?

MRS. BORRIDGE [*beaming*]. Well, if
you don't mind, Mrs. Cassilis, I don't.
But it's not the way girls were taught
to behave in my young days.

ETHEL [*slight yawn*]. That was so
long ago, mums!

MRS. CASSILIS [*rising*]. Well, I must
go and see after my housekeeping.
Can you entertain each other while
I'm away for a little? My sister will
be down soon, I hope. She had break-
fast in her room. And Geoffrey will be
back in half an hour. I asked him to
ride over to Milverton for me with a
note.

ETHEL. We shall be all right, Mrs.
Cassilis. Mother'll go to sleep. She
always does if you make her too com-
fortable. And then she'll snore, won't
you, mums?

[*Mrs. CASSILIS goes into the
house, smiling bravely to the last*]

MRS. BORRIDGE [*alarmed*]. Ethel, you shouldn't talk like that before Mrs. Cassilis. She won't like it.

ETHEL. Oh yes, she will. And I'm going to make her like *me* awfully. What lovely clothes she has! I wish you had lovely clothes, mums.

MRS. BORRIDGE. What's the matter with my clothes, dearie? I 'ad on my best silk last night. And I bought this blouse special in the Grove only a week ago so as to do you credit.

ETHEL. I know. Still . . . Couldn't you have chosen something *quieter*?

MRS. BORRIDGE. Oh no, dearie. I 'ate quiet things.

ETHEL. Hate, mother.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Hate, then. Give me something *cheerful*.

ETHEL [*hopelessly*]. Very well, mummy.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*imploring*]. But *do* be careful what you say before Mrs. Cassilis. She's not used to girls being so free.

ETHEL. Oh yes, she is, mums. All girls are like that nowadays. All girls that are ladies, I mean. They bet, and talk slang, and smoke cigarettes, and play bridge. I know all about that. I've read about it in "The Ladies' Mail." One of them put ice down her young man's back at dinner, and when he broke off his engagement she only laughed.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*lamentably*]. Oh dear, I do hope there won't be ice for dinner to-night.

ETHEL [*laughing*]. Poor mums, don't be anxious. I'll be *very* careful, I promise you.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*complaining*]. You're so 'eadstrong. And I *do* want to see you married and respectable. I wasn't always respectable myself, and I know what it means for a girl. Your sister Nan, she's gay, she is. She 'adn't no ambition. An' look what she is now!

ETHEL [*looking round nervously*]. If Geoff were to hear of it!

MRS. BORRIDGE. 'E won't. Not 'e! I've seen to that.

ETHEL. These things always get known somehow.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Nan's changed 'er name. Calls 'erself Mrs. Seymour. An' she never comes to see us now. If she did, I'd show 'er the door fast enough. Disgracin' us like that!

ETHEL. Poor Nan!

MRS. BORRIDGE [*warmly*]. Do pity 'er. She don't deserve i treated us like dirt. She's a bad through. I've done things myse didn't ought to 'ave done. But always *wanted* to be respectable it's not so easy when you've you to make and no one to look to. *nods* Yes, I've 'ad my bad times, But I've pulled through them. *made* your father marry me. No deny that. It wasn't easy. An to give him all my savings bef say "Yes." And even then I 'appy till we'd been to church. did marry me in the end. An you was born, an' I says my gi be brought up respectable. Sh be a lady. And some day, whe married an' ridin' in her carriage say, "It's all my mother's doing

[*Wipes her eyes in pensive choly*]

ETHEL. How long *were* you to father, mums?

MRS. BORRIDGE. Only eight dearie. Before that I was 'is keeper.

ETHEL. His, mummy.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Very well, [*With quiet satisfaction*] Father 'isself to death the year Bend the Derby. [*Shaking her head*] lost a pot o' money over that, preyed on 'is mind. So he took drink. If he 'adn't insured 'is kep' the premiums paid we shou been in the 'ouse, that's where we 'ave been, dearie.

ETHEL. Poor dad!

MRS. BORRIDGE. Yes. 'E faults. But 'e was a kind-'earted was Joe Borrige. 'E died mpected. [*Cheering up*] An' now engaged to a real gentleman! the sort for my Eth!

ETHEL. Oh! sh! mums.

[*Looking round nervously*]

MRS. BORRIDGE. No one'll And if they do, what's the You've got 'is promise.

ETHEL. His, mother.

MRS. BORRIDGE. You can h — him — to it.

ETHEL [*nodding*]. Yes. I Geoff's awfully in love with me I really rather like *him*, you k in a way.

MRS. BORRIDGE. I know, Still, I'd get something from paper if I was you, something

m. The men takes a bit of 'old-
owadays. They're that slippy!
get something that'll 'old 'em.
s what I always say to girls.
s is best. Oh, the chances I've
missed through not gettin' some-
on paper!

ETHEL [*confidently*]. You needn't
mummy. Geoff's all right.

S. BORRIDGE. I dare say. Still,
e something the lawyers can take
f Geoffy may get tired of *you*,
Men are that changeable. I
them!

ETHEL [*viciously*]. He'd better not!
like him *pay* for it!

S. BORRIDGE. So you could,
if you 'ad somethin' on paper.

ETHEL [*shrugs impatiently*]. Well, if
on't, you won't. But if anythin'
ns don't say I didn't warn you,
all. I wish Geoffy was a lord,
ord Buckfastleigh.

ETHEL. I don't.

S. BORRIDGE. Well, not *just* like
astleigh, per'aps. But still, a
You never did like Buckfastleigh.

ETHEL. That old beast!

S. BORRIDGE [*remonstrating*]. He's
a good friend to us, dearie. And
an earl, whatever you may say.

ETHEL. Pah!

S. BORRIDGE. And he's rich.
r than Geoffy. And he's awfully
on you, dearie. I believe he'd
married you if 'is old woman 'ad
l up 'er toes last autumn. And
eventy-three. He wouldn't 'ave
long.

ETHEL [*fiercely*]. I wouldn't marry
if he were twice as rich—and
as old.

S. BORRIDGE [*placidly*]. I dare
ou're right, dearie. He's a queer
s Buckfastleigh. But he offered
ttle five thousand down if you'd
Paris with 'im. Five thousand
on the nail. He wasn't what
call sober when he said it, but he
t it. I dare say he'd 'ave made it
if you hadn't boxed 'is ears.

ETHEL [*laughs*]. Wasn't I savage when
lid that, dearie! But you was
as it turned out. For Geoffy
sed next day. And now you'll
real married woman. There's
ug like being married. It's so
table. When you're married you
ok down on people. And that's
very woman wants. That's why
hed and screwed and sent you to

boarding school. I said my girlie shall
be a real lady. And she is.

[*Much moved at the reflection*]

ETHEL. Is she, mums?

MRS. BORRIDGE. Of course, dearie.
That's why she's 'ere. Deynham
Abbey, two footmen in livery, fire in 'er
bedroom, evenin' dress every night of
'er life. Lady Marchmont invited to
meet her! Everythin' tip top! And
it's not a bit too good for my girl. It's
what she was made for.

ETHEL [*thoughtfully*]. I wish Johnny
Travers had had some money. Then I
could have married him.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Married 'im—
him! Married a auctioneer's clerk
without twopence to bless 'isself. I
should think not indeed! Not likely!

ETHEL. Still, I was awfully gone on
Johnny.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*decidedly*]. Non-
sense, Eth. I should 'ope we can look
'igher than *that*!

ETHEL. Sh! mother. Here's Geoff.

[GEOFFREY, in riding breeches, comes out
of the house]

GEOFFREY. Good morning, dear.
[Kisses ETHEL] I thought I should be
back earlier, but I rode over to Milver-
ton for the mater [To MRS. BOR-
RIDGE] Good morning.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*archly*]. You 'aven't
no kisses to spare for *me*, 'ave you,
Geoffy? Never mind. You keep 'em
all for my girl. She's worth 'em.

GEOFFREY [*caressing her hand*]. Dear
Ethel.

MRS. BORRIDGE. How well you look
in those riding togs, Geoffrey! Don't
'e, Eth?

[*Endeavouring to hoist herself out
of her chair*]

ETHEL [*smiling at him*]. Geoff always
looks well in everything.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Well, I'll go indoors
and leave you two to spoon. That's
what you want, I know. I'll go and
talk to your ma.

[*Waddles off into the house, beam-
ing*]

GEOFFREY [*picking rose and bringing
it to ETHEL*]. A rose for the prettiest
girl in England.

ETHEL. Oh, Geoff, do you think so?

GEOFFREY. Of course. The pretti-
est and the best. [Takes her hand]

ETHEL. You do really love me,
Geoff, don't you?

GEOFFREY. Do you doubt it?

[Kisses her]

ETHEL. No; you're much too good to me, you know.

GEOFFREY. Nonsense, darling.

ETHEL. It's the truth. You're a gentleman and rich, and have fine friends. While mother and I are common as common.

GEOFFREY [firmly]. You're *not*.

ETHEL. Oh yes, we are. Of course, I've been to school, and been taught things. But what's education? It can't alter how we're made, can it? And she and I are the same underneath.

GEOFFREY. Ethel, you're not to say such things, or to think them.

ETHEL. But they're true, Geoff.

GEOFFREY. They're *not*. [Kisses her] Say they're not.

ETHEL [shakes her head]. No.

GEOFFREY. Say they're *not*. [Kisses her] *Not!*

ETHEL. Very well. They're not.

GEOFFREY. That's right. [Kiss] There's a reward.

ETHEL [pulling herself away]. I wonder if I did right to say "Yes" when you asked me, Geoff? Right for *you*, I mean.

GEOFFREY. Of course you did, darling. You love me, don't you?

ETHEL. But wouldn't it have been best for you if I'd said "No"? Then you'd have married Lady Somebody or other, with lots and lots of money, and lived happy ever afterwards.

GEOFFREY [indignantly]. I shouldn't.

ETHEL. Oh yes, you would.

GEOFFREY. And what would *you* have done, pray?

ETHEL. Oh, I should have taken up with some one else, or perhaps married old Buckfastleigh when his wife died.

GEOFFREY. Ethel!

ETHEL. I should. I'm not the sort to go on moping for long. I should have been awfully down for a bit, and missed you every day. But by-and-by I should have cheered up and married some one else. I could have done it. I could!

GEOFFREY. And what about *me*?

ETHEL. Wouldn't you have been happier in the end, dear? I'm not the sort of wife you ought to have married. Some day I expect you'll come to hate me. [Sighs] Heigho.

GEOFFREY [softly]. You know I sha'n't, dear.

ETHEL. But I did so want to marry

a gentleman. Mother wanted [Quite simply] So I said "Yes" see.

GEOFFREY [drawing her to] Darling!

[Kisses her to]

ETHEL. Geoff, what did *your* say when you told her we were engaged? Was she dreadfully down about it?

GEOFFREY. No.

ETHEL. On your honour?

GEOFFREY. On my honour. I never said a single word to me about it. Lady Marchmont scolded me. She's my aunt, you see.

ETHEL. Old cat!

GEOFFREY. And so did Lady Enham. She's my godmother. Mother stood up for us all through.

ETHEL [sighs]. I shall never be so well off as you, Geoff.

GEOFFREY. You will. Any one as pretty as my Ethel can get on anywhere.

ETHEL. Yes, I *am* pretty, and I'm glad of that. It makes a difference, doesn't it?

GEOFFREY. Of course. In a way you'll have them all running after you.

ETHEL [clapping her hands]. Geoff? Won't that be splendid? [Kisses him] Oh, Geoff, I'm so happy. When shall we be married?

GEOFFREY. I'm afraid not till next year, dear. Next June, mother says.

ETHEL [pouting]. That's a long time off, Geoff.

GEOFFREY. Yes, but mother says you're to be here a *great* deal before now and then, almost all the time. So it won't be so bad, will it?

ETHEL. Why does your mother put it off till then?

GEOFFREY. Something about the London season, she said. We shall be married in London, of course, in your mother's house is there.

ETHEL. Oh yes, of course.

GEOFFREY. And besides, mother says she never believes in very short engagements. She says girls sometime quite know their own minds. I was sure you weren't like that. I asked me to promise, so I did.

ETHEL. Well, that's settled. [Jumping up] And won't it be splendid to be married? Really married. And now I want to do something else. I'm tired of sitting still. What shall I do?

GEOFFREY [with brilliant origin]. We might go for a walk up Mount Hill. The view there's awfully

at watch] But there's hardly time for lunch.

CL. Besides, I should spoil my

[Puts out foot, the shoe of which is manifestly not intended for country walking]

FFREY. Suppose we go to the berry bed and eat strawberries?

CL. Oh yes, that'll be splendid. I shall be so deliciously greedy over berries.

[Puts her arm in his, and he leads her off to the strawberry beds.

As they go off, MRS. CASSILIS, LADY MARCHMONT, and MRS. BORRIDGE come down from terrace]

CASSILIS. Going for a stroll,

FFREY. Only as far as the strawberry bed, mother dear.

CASSILIS. Oughtn't dear Ethel to have a hat? The sun is very hot

CL. I've got a parasol, Mrs.

[They disappear down the path]

BORRIDGE [rallying her]. You had better go down to breakfast, Lady March-

MARCHMONT. No, I—had a headache.

CASSILIS. Poor Margaret.

BORRIDGE [sympathetically]. It's a very warm day, isn't it?

[Subsiding into a chair. MRS. BORRIDGE makes it a rule of life never to stand when she can sit]

MARCHMONT. I suppose it is.

BORRIDGE. Or perhaps it was the butter patties last night? I've often felt like this after an oyster I come over quite fresh. Specially if it isn't quite fresh.

MARCHMONT. Indeed!

BORRIDGE. Yes. But crabs is simply poison to me.

MARCHMONT [faintly]. How extraordinary.

BORRIDGE. They are, I do assure you. If I touch a crab I'm that sure everybody would believe it.

CASSILIS. Well, Margaret, I think you oughtn't to be talked to or teased to make your head worse. You had better quietly and rest while I take Mrs. Borrige for a stroll in the garden.

MARCHMONT. Thank you. [Closes her eyes] My head is a little better.

MRS. BORRIDGE [confidentially]. Try a drop of brandy, Lady Marchmont. My husband always said there's nothing like brandy if you're feeling poorly.

LADY MARCHMONT. Thank you. I think I'll just try what rest will do.

MRS. CASSILIS [making LADY MARCHMONT comfortable]. I expect that will be best. Put your head back, dear. Headaches are such trying things, aren't they, Mrs. Borrige? This way! And you're to keep quite quiet till luncheon, Margaret

[LADY MARCHMONT closes her eyes, with a sigh of relief. After a moment enter BUTLER from house, with MRS. HERRIES]

BUTLER. Mrs. Herries.

LADY MARCHMONT [rises, and goes up to meet her]. How do you do? Mrs. Cassilis is in the garden, Watson. [To Mrs. HERRIES] She has just gone for a stroll with Mrs. Borrige.

MRS. HERRIES. Oh, pray don't disturb her. Pray don't. I can only stay for a moment. Literally a moment.

LADY MARCHMONT. But she would be so sorry to miss you. Will you let her know, Watson? She went that way.

[Pointing to path along which MRS. CASSILIS went a moment before]

BUTLER. Yes, my lady.

LADY MARCHMONT. And how's the dear Rector? [She and MRS. HERRIES sit] You've not brought him with you?

MRS. HERRIES. No. He was too busy. There is always so much to do in these small parishes, isn't there?

LADY MARCHMONT. Indeed?

MRS. HERRIES. Oh yes. There's the garden—and the pigs. The Rector is devoted to his pigs, you know. And his roses.

LADY MARCHMONT. The Rector's roses are quite famous, aren't they?

[But MRS. HERRIES has not come to Deynham to talk horticulture, but to inquire about a far more interesting subject. She looks round cautiously, and then, lowering her voice to an undertone, puts the important question]

MRS. HERRIES. And now tell me, dear Lady Marchmont, before Mrs. Cassilis comes back, what is she like?

LADY MARCHMONT. Really, dear Mrs. Herries, I think I must leave you to decide that for yourself.

MRS. HERRIES [sighs]. So bad as that! The Rector feared so. And the

mother? [No answer] Just so! What a pity. An orphan is so much easier to deal with.

LADY MARCHMONT [laughing slightly]. You may be glad to hear that Mr. Borridge is dead.

MRS. HERRIES. So Mrs. Cassilis said. How fortunate! How very fortunate!

[MRS. CASSILIS, followed by MRS. BORRIDGE, return from their walk. WATSON brings up the rear]

MRS. HERRIES. Dear Mrs. Cassilis, how do you do? [Sympathetically] How are you?

MRS. CASSILIS [rather amused at MRS. HERRIES'S elaborate bedside manner]. Quite well, thanks. It's Margaret who is unwell.

MRS. HERRIES. Indeed! She didn't mention it.

LADY MARCHMONT [hurriedly]. I have a headache.

MRS. HERRIES. I'm so sorry.

MRS. CASSILIS [sweetly]. You have heard of my son's engagement, haven't you? Dear Ethel is with us now, I'm glad to say. Let me introduce you to her mother.

MRS. HERRIES. How do you do? [Bows] What charming weather we're having, aren't we?

MRS. CASSILIS. You'll stay to luncheon now you are here, won't you?

[MRS. BORRIDGE subsides into a chair]

MRS. HERRIES. I'm afraid I mustn't. I left the Rector at home. He will be expecting me.

MRS. CASSILIS. Why didn't you bring him with you?

MRS. HERRIES. So kind of you, dear Mrs. Cassilis. [Nervously] But he hardly liked — How is poor Geoffrey?

MRS. CASSILIS [cheerfully]. He's very well. He's in the kitchen garden with Ethel. At the strawberry bed. You'll see them if you wait.

MRS. HERRIES [hastily]. I'm afraid I can't. In fact, I must run away at once. I only looked in in passing. It's nearly one o'clock, and the Rector always likes his luncheon at one. [Shakes hands with gush of sympathetic fervour] Good-bye, dear Mrs. Cassilis. Good-bye, Mrs. Borridge. [Bows]

MRS. BORRIDGE [stretching out her hand]. Good-bye, Mrs. — I didn't rightly catch your name.

MRS. HERRIES. Herries. Mrs. Herries. [Shakes hands nervously]

MRS. BORRIDGE [heartily]. Good-bye, Mrs. 'Erris.

MRS. CASSILIS. And you're over to dine on Thursday? The day week, you know. And the of course. You won't forget?

MRS. HERRIES. With Good-bye, Lady Marchmont.

[Looks at MRS. BORRIDGE, turned away, then at LADY MARCHMONT, then goes much depressed, into the Pause]

MRS. BORRIDGE. I think going in too, Mrs. Cassilis, just myself straight for dinner.

MRS. CASSILIS. Yes. Do. LADY MARCHMONT will be ready in half an hour. BORRIDGE waddles off into the room complacently. LADY MARCHMONT limply into a chair, with a slight groan. MRS. CASSILIS resumes her voice] How's your headache, Mrs. Borridge? Better?

LADY MARCHMONT. Quite well. In fact, I never had a headache. It was a little deception on my part to excuse my absence from the fast table. Will you forgive me? [MRS. CASSILIS nods without looking up. She looks perfectly wretched. LADY MARCHMONT makes a resolute effort to cheer her up by adopting a light tone. It is obviously an effort] Break it rather a mistake, aren't they? I'm sorry to the temper. And that woman! I felt a brute for doing you. On the very first morning. But I didn't feel strong enough to see her again so soon. How could I do it!

MRS. CASSILIS [grimly]. Good-bye. Not going to marry Mrs. Borridge?

LADY MARCHMONT. He's going to marry the daughter. And she'll like her mother ultimately. I do, poor things.

MRS. CASSILIS [sighs]. Poor Cassilis. I suppose there's something wrong with the way we bring boys up. When they reach manhood they seem quite unable to distinguish between the right of woman and — the other side of the pretty face, and they're caught. It's only after they've lived forty years in the world and got so hard — hardened — got what we call experience in fact — that they even begin to stand the difference.

BY MARCHMONT [*decidedly*]. You to have sent Geoffrey to a public school. His father ought to have intervened on it.

MRS. CASSILIS. Poor Charley died. Geoff was only twelve. And when left alone I couldn't make up my mind to part with him. Besides, I hate to see public school boys look on at me.

BY MARCHMONT Still, it's a safe-

MRS. CASSILIS [*dismally*]. Perhaps

[*Neither of the sisters speaks for a moment. Both are plunged in painful thought. Suddenly* LADY MARCHMONT looks up and catches sight of MRS. CASSILIS'S face, which looks drawn and miserable. She goes over to her with something like a cry]

BY MARCHMONT. My dear Ade- don't look like that. You frighten

MRS. CASSILIS [*pulling herself together*]. What's the matter?

BY MARCHMONT. Your face looked awfully grey! Didn't you sleep last

MRS. CASSILIS. Not very much. [*beginning to smile*] Has my hair gone too?

BY MARCHMONT. Of course not.

MRS. CASSILIS. I feared it might.

BY MARCHMONT. You poor dear!

MRS. CASSILIS [*impulsively*]. I am still, am I not, Margaret?

BY MARCHMONT. My dear, you are perfectly sweet, as you always do. There are one or two little lines I noticed before. But your hair's

MRS. CASSILIS [*eagerly*]. I'm glad of that. I shall need all my looks now for Geoffrey's sake

BY MARCHMONT [*puzzled*]. Geoffrey?

MRS. CASSILIS. Looks mean so much to a man, don't they? And he has always admired me. Now I shall want to be admired more than ever.

BY MARCHMONT. Why, dear?

MRS. CASSILIS [*with cold intensity*]. I suppose I have a rival.

BY MARCHMONT. This detestable

MRS. CASSILIS [*nods*]. Yes.

BY MARCHMONT. My dear Ade- isn't it too late now?

MRS. CASSILIS. Too late? Why, the time has scarcely begun. At present Geoffrey is over head and ears in love with her. While that goes on we can do nothing. [*With absolute conviction*] But it won't last.

LADY MARCHMONT [*surprised at her confidence*]. Won't it?

MRS. CASSILIS. No. That kind of love never does. It dies because it is a thing of the senses only. It has no foundation in reason, in common tastes, common interests, common associations. So it dies. [*With a bitter smile*] My place is by its deathbed.

LADY MARCHMONT [*with a slight shudder*]. That sounds rather ghoul-

MRS. CASSILIS. It is.

LADY MARCHMONT [*more lightly*]. Are you going to do anything to hasten its demise?

MRS. CASSILIS [*quite practical*]. Oh yes. In the first place, they're to stay here for a long visit. I want them to feel thoroughly at home. Vulgar people are so much more vulgar when they feel at home, aren't they?

LADY MARCHMONT. You can hardly expect any change in that direction from Mrs. Borridge.

MRS. CASSILIS [*a short, mirthless laugh*]. I suppose not. [*Practical again*] Then I shall ask lots of people to meet them. Oh, lots of people. So that Geoffrey may have the benefit of the contrast. I've asked Mabel to stay, by the way — for a week — to help to entertain dear Ethel. When those two are together it should open Geoffrey's eyes more than anything.

LADY MARCHMONT. Love is blind.

MRS. CASSILIS [*briskly*]. It sees a great deal better than it used to do, dear. Far better than it did when we were young people.

[*Pause*]

LADY MARCHMONT. Anything else?

MRS. CASSILIS. Not at the moment. [*A ghost of a smile*] Yes, by the way. There's Major Warrington.

LADY MARCHMONT [*shocked*]. You're not really going to consult that dissipated wretch?

MRS. CASSILIS [*recklessly*]. I would consult the Witch of Endor if I thought she could help me — and if I knew her address. Oh, I'm prepared to go any lengths. I wonder if he would elope with her for a consideration?

LADY MARCHMONT [*horrified*]. Ade-

laide, you wouldn't do that. It would be dreadful. Think of the scandal.

MRS. CASSILIS. My dear, if she would elope with Watson, I'd raise his wages.

[Rises]

LADY MARCHMONT. Adelaide!

MRS. CASSILIS [defiantly]. I would. Ah, Margaret, you've no children. [Her voice quivering and her eyes shining with intensity of emotion] You don't know how it feels to see your son wrecking his life and not be able to prevent it. I love my son better than anything else in the whole world. There is nothing I wouldn't do to save him. That is how mothers are made. That's what we're for.

LADY MARCHMONT [slight shrug]. Poor girl!

MRS. CASSILIS [fiercely]. You're *not* to pity her, Margaret. I forbid you. She tried to steal away my son.

LADY MARCHMONT. Still —

MRS. CASSILIS [impatiently]. Margaret, don't be sentimental. The girl's not in *love* with Geoffrey. Any one can see that. She's in love with his position and his money, the money he will have some day. She doesn't really care two straws for him. It was a trap, a trap from the beginning, and poor Geoff blundered into it.

LADY MARCHMONT. She couldn't make the omnibus horse fall down!

MRS. CASSILIS. No. That was chance. But after that she set herself to catch him, and her mother egged her on no doubt, and taught her how to play her fish. And you pity her!

LADY MARCHMONT [soothingly]. I don't really. At least, I did for a moment. But I suppose you're right.

MRS. CASSILIS [vehemently]. Of course I'm right. I'm Geoffrey's mother. Who should know if I don't? Mothers have eyes. If she really cared for him I should know. I might try to blind myself, but I should *know*. But she doesn't. And she sha'n't marry him. She sha'n't!

LADY MARCHMONT. My dear, don't glare at me like that. I'm not trying to make the match.

MRS. CASSILIS. Was I glaring?

LADY MARCHMONT. You looked rather tigerish. [MRS. CASSILIS gives short laugh. Pause] By the way, as she's *not* to be your daughter-in-law, is it necessary to be quite so affectionate to her all the time? It rather gets on my nerves.

MRS. CASSILIS. It is absolutely necessary. If there were any division between us the girl would be on my side, and Geoffrey would be on her side. That would be fatal. She must never know how I feel about her. No! When this engagement is broken off I shall kiss her affectionately at parting, and when the carriage is round I shall shed tears.

LADY MARCHMONT [wondering].

MRS. CASSILIS. Because of course it would make a division between Geoffrey and me. And I couldn't do that. I must keep his love whole. That happens. And if I have to tell him a little to keep it, isn't that what we women always have to do? In fact, I shall have to deceive even you, except you. Lady Remenham has done so. Herries, the whole county. I once knew they would be sure to do so. Lady Remenham never does a thing else, does she? And later on, when the engagement was all over and done with, Geoffrey would get to hear of it, and he'd never forgive me.

LADY MARCHMONT. My dear, your unscrupulousness appals me. CASSILIS shrugs impatiently]. Well, it's not very nice, you must admit.

MRS. CASSILIS [exasperated]. Of course it's not *nice*! Good heavens! Margaret, you don't suppose I'm doing this sort of thing, do you? It's because I must, because it's the only way to save Geoffrey. If I married her he'd be miserable. He won't have that. Of course it would be *pleasanter* to be perfectly straightforward, and tell the girl I detest her. But if I did she'd marry Geoffrey to spite me. So I must trap her. She has trapped him. It's not a *nice* thing, but it's the only possible one. CASSILIS [calmly]. Yes, I must be on the same terms with Ethel. [With a smile of enjoyment at the thought] And you must make friends with that appalling girl.

LADY MARCHMONT [firmly]. Adelaide! I refuse!

MRS. CASSILIS [crosses to her]. You must! You must!

[Takes her two hands and looks into her eyes]

LADY MARCHMONT [giving way]. Noted. Very well. I'll do as you say. [MRS. CASSILIS drops her hands away with a sigh of relief] But I must come down to breakfast! The limits to my endurance. [P]

do so hate breakfasting in my
The crumbs always get into

CASSILIS [*consoling her*]. Never
When we've won you shall share

MARCHMONT [*doubtfully*].
going to win?

CASSILIS [*nods*]. I'm going to
I've no doubt whatever about
I've brains and she hasn't.
rains always tell in the end. Be-
she did something this morning
made me sure that I should

MARCHMONT [*trying to get back
lightness of tone*]. She didn't
h her knife?

CASSILIS [*resolutely serious*].
he — *yawned*.

MARCHMONT [*puzzled*].
d?

CASSILIS. Yes. Three times.
I saw that I knew that I should

MARCHMONT [*peevish*]. My
de laide, what do you mean?

CASSILIS. Girls like that can't
boredom. They're used to ex-
t, the vulgar excitement of Bo-
life in London. Theatres, sup-
ties, plenty of fast society. She
as much this morning. Well,
ere she shall be dull, oh, how
I will see to that. The curate
ome to dinner. And old Lady
s, with her tracts and her
t. I've arranged that it shall
ng engagement. She shall yawn
e purpose before it's over. And
he's bored she'll get cross. You'll
he'll begin to quarrel with her
, and nag at Geoffrey — at every
fact, except me. I shall be too
o her for that. [*With a long look
r sister's eyes*] And that will be
inning of the end.

MARCHMONT [*turning away her
th something like a shiver*]. Well,
I think your plan diabolical.
But your courage is perfectly
d, and I love you for it. [*Lays
n her shoulder for a moment caress-
ch*].

LADY MARCHMONT *turns to go
into the house. As she does so
the BUTLER comes out, followed
by MABEL in riding habit.*

MRS. CASSILIS'S manner
changes at once. The intense

seriousness with which she has
been talking to her sister dis-
appears in an instant, and in-
stead you have the charming
hostess, without a care in the
world, only thinking of wel-
coming her guest and making
her comfortable. It is a triumph
of pluck — and breeding]

BUTLER. Lady Mabel Venning.

MRS. CASSILIS [*rising*]. Ah, Mabel
dear, how are you? [*Kisses her*]
You've ridden over? But you're going
to stay here, you know. Haven't you
brought your things?

MABEL. Mamma is sending them
after me. It was such a perfect morn-
ing for a ride. How do you do, Lady
Marchmont? [*Shaking hands*]

MRS. CASSILIS. That's right. Wat-
son, tell them to take Lady Mabel's
horse round to the stables. She will
keep it here while she is with us. [*To
MABEL*] Then you'll be able to ride
every day with Geoffrey. [*To LADY
MARCHMONT*] Poor Ethel doesn't ride.
Isn't it unfortunate?

LADY MARCHMONT. Very!

MRS. CASSILIS. She and Geoffrey
are down at the strawberry bed spoiling
their appetites for luncheon. Would
you like to join them?

MABEL. I think not, thanks. It's
rather hot, isn't it? I think I'd rather
stay here with you.

MRS. CASSILIS. As you please, dear.
[*They sit*]

MABEL. Oh, before I forget, mamma
asked me to tell you she telegraphed
to Uncle Algernon yesterday, and he's
coming down next Wednesday. She
had a letter from him this morning by
the second post. It came just before
I started. Such a funny letter. Mamma
asked me to bring it to you to read.

MRS. CASSILIS [*taking letter, and read-
ing it aloud to her sister*]. "My dear
Julia, — I am at a loss to understand
to what I owe the honour of an invita-
tion to Milverton. I thought I had
forfeited all claim to it for ever. I can
only suppose you have at last found an
heiress to marry me. If this is so I
may as well say at once that unless she
is both extremely rich and extremely
pretty I shall decline to entertain her
proposal. My experience is that that
is a somewhat unusual combination.
I will be with you next Wednesday. —
Your affectionate brother, A. L. War-
rington." [*Giving back letter*] That's

right, then. And now I think I'll just go down to the kitchen garden and tell Geoffrey you're here. [*Rises*] No, don't come too. You stay and entertain Margaret.

[*She goes off by the path leading to the strawberry beds*]

LADY MARCHMONT. Dear Major Warrington. He always was the most delightfully witty, wicked creature. I'm so glad he's coming while I'm here. Adelaide must be sure and ask him over.

MABEL. Uncle Algernon is coming over to dine this day week — with mamma.

LADY MARCHMONT. To be sure; I remember.

[*Enter GEOFFREY quickly from garden*]

GEOFFREY. Halloo, Mabel! How do you do? [*Shaking hands*] I didn't know you were here.

MABEL. Mrs. Cassilis has just gone to tell you.

GEOFFREY. I know. She met us as we were coming back from eating strawberries. We've been perfect pigs. She and Ethel will be here in a moment. I ran on ahead.

LADY MARCHMONT [*rising*]. Well, it's close on lunch time. I shall go in and get ready.

[*LADY MARCHMONT goes off into the house, leaving the young people together. They begin to chatter at once with the easy familiarity of long acquaintance*]

GEOFFREY. You rode over?

[*Sitting on the arm of her chair*]

MABEL. Yes, on Basil. He really is the sweetest thing. I like him much better than Hector.

GEOFFREY. Poor old Hector. He's not so young as he was.

MABEL. No.

[*GEOFFREY suddenly remembers that there is something more important than horses which he has to say before ETHEL arrives. He hesitates for a moment, and then plunges into his subject*]

GEOFFREY. Mabel . . . There's something I want to ask you.

MABEL. Is there?

GEOFFREY. Yes. But I don't know how to say it. [*Hesitates again*]

MABEL [*smiling*]. Perhaps you'd better not try, then?

GEOFFREY. I must. I feel I ought.

It's about something Aunt Mabel said yesterday. . . . [*Blushing*] Mabel, did you ever . . . did . . . did I ever do anything to you think I . . . I was going you to marry me?

[*Looking her bravely in the face*]

MABEL [*turning her eyes away*]. Geoff.

GEOFFREY. Sure?

MABEL. Quite sure.

GEOFFREY. I'm glad.

MABEL [*looking up, surprised*]. Geoff?

GEOFFREY. Because from what Margaret said I was afraid, without telling it, I'd . . . I — hadn't quite honourable.

MABEL [*gently*]. You have been everything that is honest, Geoff. And everything that is good.

GEOFFREY [*relieved*]. Thank you, Mabel. You're a brick, you are. And we shall always be friends, shall we?

MABEL. Always.

GEOFFREY. And you'll be friends with Ethel too?

MABEL. If she'll let me.

GEOFFREY. Of course she'll let me. She's the dearest girl. She's ready to be friends with everybody. And I love you, I know. [*Stands up*] I promise? [*Holds out his hand*]

MABEL [*takes it*]. I promise.

[*MRS. CASSILIS and ETHEL enter from garden. MR. CASSILIS has her arm in ETHEL'S, and they make a picture of mutual affection which would have made LADY MARCHMONT scream. She is safely in her room with her hands. MRS. CASSILIS smiles at MABEL as she speaks, but does not relax her hold on her future daughter-in-law*]

MRS. CASSILIS. Not gone yet, Mabel?

MABEL. No. Lady Marchmont only went a minute ago.

MRS. CASSILIS. [*To ETHEL*] Not met Mabel yet, have you? Introduce you. Miss Borridge — Mabel Venning. [*Sweetly*] I want two to be great friends! [*They shake hands*] And now come in and be ready for luncheon.

[*They all move towards the door as the curtain falls*]

ACT III

— The smoking-room at Deyn-m. A week has elapsed since the 1st Act, and the time is after dinner. The room has two doors, one leading to the hall and the rest of the house, the other communicating with the billiard-room. There is a fireplace on the left, in which a fire burns brightly. A writing-table occupies the centre of the stage. Further up is a grand piano. By its side a table with music on it. Obviously Major Cassilis's room from the substantial writing-table, with the cigar-box on it and the leather-covered arm-chairs. "The Field" and "The Sportsman" are on a sofa hard by. The room is lighted by lamps. The stage is empty when the curtain rises. Then GEOFFREY enters from hall. He passes to the door of the billiard-room, opens it, and looks in. Then he turns and speaks to MAJOR WARRINGTON, who has just entered from the hall. WARRINGTON is a cheerful, rather dissipated-looking man of thirty-and-forty.

GEOFFREY. It's all right, Warrington. They've lighted the lamps.

WARRINGTON. Good.

[Strolling across towards fireplace]

GEOFFREY [at door of billiard-room]. Many will you give me?

WARRINGTON. Oh, hang billiards! Not up to a game to-night. That's only an excuse to get away from me. I believe that's why games were invented. But if you could get whisky and soda I should be your ideal debtor. Julia kept such an awfully strict watch on me all the time that I never got more than a glass and a half of champagne. A man can't get along on that, can he?

GEOFFREY. I'll ring.

WARRINGTON. Do. There's a good fellow. [GEOFFREY rings] Every man has a certain amount of liquid per hour. I've seen the statistics in "The Field." But Julia never reads "The Field." Women never do read anything, I believe.

GEOFFREY. Have another cigar?

WARRINGTON. Thanks. Don't mind me. [Takes one and lights it] Aren't you going to?

GEOFFREY [who looks seedy and out of sorts]. No, thanks.

[Enter FOOTMAN, with whisky and soda]

Whisky and soda, James.

FOOTMAN. Yes, sir.

[Puts it on small table and goes out]

WARRINGTON. Off your smoke?

GEOFFREY. Yes. [Pouring whisky] Say when.

WARRINGTON. When. [Takes soda] You're not going to have one?

GEOFFREY. No.

WARRINGTON. Off your drink?

GEOFFREY. Yes.

WARRINGTON. That's bad. What's the matter?

[Selects comfortable easy-chair and sits lazily]

GEOFFREY. Oh, nothing. I'm a bit out of sorts, I suppose.

WARRINGTON. How well your mother looks to-night, by the way! Jove, what a pretty woman she is!

GEOFFREY. Dear mother.

WARRINGTON [sips whisky meditatively]. How does she like this marriage of yours?

GEOFFREY [off-hand]. All right.

WARRINGTON. Ah! [Nods] Bites on the bullet. No offence, my dear fellow. I like her pluck.

GEOFFREY [exasperated]. I assure you, you're mistaken. My mother's been kindness itself over my engagement. She's never said a word against it from the first. I believe she's the only person in this infernal county who hasn't.

WARRINGTON. Except myself.

GEOFFREY. Except yourself. And you think me a thundering young fool.

WARRINGTON. Oh no.

GEOFFREY. Oh yes. I could see you looking curiously at me all through dinner — when you weren't eating — as if I were some strange beast. You think I'm a fool right enough.

WARRINGTON [stretching himself luxuriously]. Not at all. Miss Borridge is a very pretty girl, very bright, very amusing. I sat next her at dinner, you know. Not quite the sort one marries, perhaps — as a rule —

GEOFFREY [crossly]. What do you mean?

WARRINGTON [shrugs]. Anyhow, you're going to marry her. So much the better for her. What amuses me is your bringing her old reprobate of a mother down here. The cheek of it quite takes away my breath.

GEOFFREY [*peevish*]. What's the matter with her mother? She's common, of course, and over-eats herself, but lots of people do that. And she's good-natured. That's more than some women are.

WARRINGTON [*looking thoughtfully at the end of his cigar*]. Still, she's scarcely the sort one introduces to one's mother, eh? But I'm old-fashioned, no doubt. There's no saying what you young fellows will do. Your code is peculiarly your own.

[*Wanders across in quest of another whisky and soda*]

GEOFFREY [*restively*]. Look here, Warrington, what do you mean?

WARRINGTON [*easily*]. Want to hit me in the eye, don't you? I know. Very natural feeling. Lots of people have it.

GEOFFREY [*sulkily*]. Why shouldn't I introduce her to my mother?

WARRINGTON. Well, she's a disreputable old woman, you know. She lived with Borridge for years before he married her. The other daughter's — [*Shrugs shoulders*] And then to bring her down here and introduce her to Julia! Gad, I like your humour.

GEOFFREY [*much perturbed at his companion's news*]. Are you sure?

WARRINGTON [*nonchalantly*]. Sure? Why, it's common knowledge. Everybody knows old Borridge, and most people loathe her. I don't. I rather like her in a way. She's so splendidly vulgar. Flings her aitches about with reckless indifference. And I like her affection for that girl. She's really fond of her. So much the worse for you, by the way. You'll never be able to keep them apart.

GEOFFREY [*irritably*]. Why should I want to keep them apart?

WARRINGTON. Why should you —? [*Drinks*] Oh, well, my dear chap, if you're satisfied —

GEOFFREY [*low voice*]. Her sister . . . ? Poor Ethel! Poor Ethel!

WARRINGTON [*with a good-natured effort to make the best of things*]. My dear chap, don't be so down in the mouth. There's no use fretting. I'd no idea you were so completely in the dark about all this, or I wouldn't have told you. Cheer up.

GEOFFREY [*huskily*]. I'm glad you told me.

WARRINGTON. To think you've been engaged all this time and never found

it out! What amazing in-
[*Chuckling*] Ha! Ha! . . .
Ha! Ha!

GEOFFREY. Don't.

[*Sinks on to sofa with*

WARRINGTON. Sorry, my d
But it's so devilish amusing.

GEOFFREY. How blind I
How utterly blind!

WARRINGTON [*shrugs shoulder*]
I rather like a chap who's a bit
myself.

GEOFFREY. Poor mother!

WARRINGTON. Doesn't she
Not about old Borridge? [*G*
shakes his head] She must!
always do. They have an
about these things that is sin
canny. It's often highly inco
too, by the way. She probab
nothing on your account.

GEOFFREY [*dismally*]. Per
Or Ethel's. She's been wor
kind to Ethel ever since she car
Perhaps that's the reason.
After all, it's not Ethel's fault.

WARRINGTON. Of course no
at him curiously, then, with an i
kindliness, goes to him and lays
shoulder] Well, here's luck,
boy, and I won't say may y
repent it, but may you put of
ing it as long as possible. T
best one can hope of most mar

GEOFFREY [*drily*]. Thanks!

WARRINGTON. Well, it's
uncommon amusin' evenin'
Herries' face has been a study
time. And as for Julia's —
raged respectability! What a

[*Further conversation is interr*
the entrance of the other gu
the hall. These are LADY
HAM, LADY MARCHMON
HERRIES, MRS. BORRIDGE
and MABEL. Last of all
RECTOR, with MRS. CASSIL
enter with a hum of convers

RECTOR. [*To his hostess*] V
a disreputable poaching fell
no more than he deserved.

MRS. CASSILIS [*nods dubiously*]
I'm sorry for his wife.

MRS. HERRIES. I'll send
her in the morning and see if s
anything.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*beaming i*
humour]. So this is where yo
men have got to!

GEORGE. I brought Major Warren to smoke a cigar.

BY REMENHAM. *[looking fixedly at you, then at WARRINGTON]*. Algernon! WARRINGTON *[protesting]*. My dear I believe there is nothing unusual man's requiring one whisky and at this time in the evening.

BY REMENHAM. I trust it has only one.

[Sits on sofa, where she is joined by LADY MARCHMONT]

WARRINGTON *[changing the subject]*. Have you been sending to jail coaching now, Rector? No Justice, I hope?

CTOR. Old Murcatt. He's one of Cassilis's tenants. A most unctatory fellow. He was caught and laying a snare in the Milveroods. It was a clear case.

[ETHEL stifles a yawn]
HEL. I should have thought there no great harm in that.

CTOR. My dear young lady!

S. CASSILIS. Take care, Ethel. An Englishman's hares are sacred. S. BORRIDGE. How silly! I can't are myself.

[Seats herself massively in arm-chair in front of piano. An awkward silence follows this insult to hares. As it threatens to grow oppressive, the RECTOR tries what can be done with partridges to bridge the gulf]

CTOR. You'll have plenty of partridges this year, Mrs. Cassilis. We and five coveys as we drove here.

S. CASSILIS *[acknowledging his help with a smile]*. We generally have a many.

[ETHEL, stifling another yawn, strolls to piano, opens it, and strikes a note or two idly]

ABEL. You play, I know, Ethel. t you play something?

HEL *[sulkily]*. No.

[Turns away, closing piano sharply. Another constrained silence]

S. HERRIES. I saw you out riding to-day, Mabel. I looked in at on's cottage. Poor fellow, I'm he's very ill.

HEL. Yes. I was with Geoffrey. ad a long ride, all through Lower rton and Carbury to Mirstoke. s delightful.

S. BORRIDGE. *[To Mrs. HERRIES]* husband has a lot of that sort of

thing to do down here, I suppose, Mrs. 'Erris?

MRS. HERRIES *[with frosty politeness]*. When people are ill they generally like a visit from a clergyman, don't they?

MRS. BORRIDGE *[bluntly]*. Well, there's no accounting for tastes. My 'usband, when he was ill, wouldn't 'ave a parson near 'im. Said it gave 'im the creeps.

[Another silence that can be felt.

WARRINGTON's shoulders quiver with delight, and he chokes hurriedly into a newspaper]

LADY MARCHMONT *[crossing to fire, with polite pretence that it is the physical, not the social, atmosphere that is freezing her to the bone]*. How sensible of you to have a fire, Adelaide.

MRS. CASSILIS *[throwing her a grateful look]*. It is pleasant, isn't it? These July evenings are often cold in the country.

[ETHEL stifles a prodigious yawn]

GEORGE *[going to her]*. Tired, Ethel?

ETHEL *[pettishly]*. No.

[Glowers at him. He turns away with slight shrug. There is yet another awkward pause]

MRS. CASSILIS *[rising nervously]*. Won't somebody play billiards? Are the lamps lighted, Geoffrey?

GEORGE. Yes, mother.

MRS. CASSILIS. Or shall we play pyramids? Then we can all join in. *[Persuasively]* You'll play, Mrs. Borridge, I'm sure?

MRS. BORRIDGE *[beaming]*. I'm on.

MRS. CASSILIS. You, Lady Remenham?

LADY REMENHAM. No, thanks. Mrs. Herries and I are going to stay by the fire and talk about the Rector's last sermon.

[The RECTOR raises hands in horror]

MRS. CASSILIS. You, Margaret?

LADY MARCHMONT. No, really. I've never played pyramids in my life.

MRS. BORRIDGE *[in high good humour]*. Then it's 'igh time you began, Lady Marchmont. I'll teach you.

[Mrs. CASSILIS looks entreaty.

LADY MARCHMONT assents, smiling]

LADY MARCHMONT. Very well. To please you, dear Mrs. Borridge!

[LADY MARCHMONT goes off to billiard-room, followed a moment later by MABEL]

MRS. CASSILIS. You, Mabel? That's three. Ethel four.

ETHEL. No, thank you, Mrs. Cassilis. I won't play.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Why not, Eth? You're a nailer at pyramids.

ETHEL [*pettishly*]. Because I'd rather not, mother. [*Turns away*]

MRS. BORRIDGE. All right, dearie. You needn't snap my nose off.

[*Goes off to billiard-room with unruffled cheerfulness*]

MRS. CASSILIS. Geoffrey five. The Rector six.

RECTOR. Very well, if you won't play for money. I've no conscientious objections to playing for money, but whenever I do it I always lose. Which comes to the same thing.

[*Follows MRS. BORRIDGE off*]

MRS. CASSILIS. You, Major Warrington, of course?

WARRINGTON [*laughing*]. No, thanks. I shall stay here and flirt with Mrs. Herries.

MRS. CASSILIS. Very well. How many did I say? Six, wasn't it? And myself seven. Coming, Geoff?

GEOFFREY. All right, mother.

[*GEOFFREY looks doubtfully at*

ETHEL for a moment, and even takes a step towards her, but she takes no notice of him. Baffled, he turns to his mother, who leads him off after the others.

LADY REMENHAM settles herself comfortably in arm-chair above the fireplace. MRS. HERRIES takes another by her, and they begin to gossip contentedly. *ETHEL* looks sullenly in their direction. *WARRINGTON* makes a valiant effort to retrieve his glass from the mantelpiece, with a view to replenishing it with whisky]

LADY REMENHAM. Now, Mrs. Herries, draw up that chair to the fire, and we'll talk scandal.

WARRINGTON [*stretching out hand towards glass*]. The Rector's sermon, Julia!

LADY REMENHAM. Algernon!

[*He stops dead. ETHEL seats herself in the armchair behind the writing-table, puts her elbows on the table, and glares into vacancy, looking rather like a handsome fury. Presently WARRINGTON joins her. She yawns with unaffected weariness.*

WARRINGTON looks at *her* with an amused smile]

WARRINGTON. Bored, Miss Bridget?

ETHEL. I wonder.

WARRINGTON [*draws up chair*]. I don't. [*She laughs*] Life is lively down here till the shooting

ETHEL [*drumming with her fist on the table*]. I don't shoot. So I'm that won't help me much.

WARRINGTON. I remember. Ride, I think you told me?

ETHEL [*yawns*]. Nor ride.

WARRINGTON. Gad. I'm so bored.

ETHEL [*looking curiously at her*]. I believe you really are.

WARRINGTON. Of course I am.

ETHEL. I don't know about that. Except for Mrs. Cassilis and poor Geoff — who doesn't care for me. I don't find much sympathy in the country. Heigho! How I hate me!

WARRINGTON [*protesting*]. No, no.

ETHEL. Oh yes, they do. One of them. From Watson, who put out my claret at dinner, and who dearly love to poison it, to your brother, who is glaring at us at this moment.

[*As, indeed, LADY REMENHAM is doing with some interest. She highly disapproves of her brother's attentions to her, but, as there is no very effective method of stopping them, she says nothing. Presently MRS. HERRIES begins a game of bezique, and that for the time being at least, distracts her attention from her brother's deplorable conduct.*]

WARRINGTON [*looking up and addressing her*]. Dear Julia. She never has any manners.

ETHEL. She's no worse than the rest. Mrs. Herries would do just the same if she dared. And as for me —!

WARRINGTON. Don't hit it off with Mabel?

ETHEL. Oh, we don't quarrel. That's what you mean, or call it. Another names across the table. We did. I could beat her at anything. We're as civil as the Devil. [*He looks at her*] What are you laughing at?

WARRINGTON. Only at the coarseness of your language.

ETHEL [*shrugs*]. Yes, Mabel does, and I hate her.

WARRINGTON. Why?

ETHEL [wearily]. Because we're different. I suppose. She's everything. She's well-born and well-bred. Her's an earl. Mine was a book-

WARRINGTON. Is that all?

ETHEL [bitterly]. No. She's running Geoffrey. [WARRINGTON looks jealous] She is!

WARRINGTON [raising eyebrows].

ETHEL. Yes. I am jealous. Little [Picks up flimsy paper-knife.] to kill her.

Makes savage jab with knife. It promptly breaks]

WARRINGTON [taking pieces out of her mouth] Don't be violent.

Carries pieces blandly to fire.

ETHEL stares straight in front of her. Meantime LADY REMENHAM has been conversing in an undertone with MRS. HERRIES, occasionally glancing over her shoulder at the other two. In the sudden hush which follows WARRINGTON'S movement towards the fireplace her voice suddenly becomes alarmingly audible]

REMENHAM. Such a common thing, too! And I don't even call it.

HERRIES. It's curious how Cassilis seems to have taken to her.

REMENHAM. Yes. She even likes that awful mother. [Irritably] Is it, Algernon?

WARRINGTON [blandly]. Only a little bit with a paper-knife.

LADY REMENHAM grunts. WARRINGTON returns to ETHEL]

HERRIES [lowering her voice] For Geoffrey's sake, of course. She's so devoted to him.

REMENHAM. It may be that. I inclined to think her mind has gone a little. I asked her about a week.

The two ladies drop their voices again to a murmur, but ETHEL has heard the last remark or two, and looks like murder]

WARRINGTON [sitting by ETHEL and interrupting thread]. You were going to tell me what makes you think she is in love with Geoffrey.

ETHEL. Was I?

WARRINGTON. Weren't you?

ETHEL. Well, perhaps I will.

WARRINGTON. Go ahead.

ETHEL. She's staying here, and they're always together. They ride almost every morning. I can't ride, you know. And Geoffrey loves it.

WARRINGTON. You should take to it.

ETHEL. I did try one day. They were just starting when I suddenly said I'd like to go with them.

WARRINGTON [startling]. What did they say to that?

ETHEL. Oh, Mabel pretended to be as pleased as possible. She lent me an old habit, and Geoff said they'd let me have a horse that was as quiet as a lamb. Horrid kicking beast!

WARRINGTON. What horse was it?

ETHEL. It was called Jasmine, or some such name.

WARRINGTON. Mrs. Cassilis's mare? Why, my dear girl, she hasn't a kick in her.

ETHEL. Hasn't she! . . . Anyhow, we started. So long as we walked it was all right, and I began to think I might actually get to like it. But soon we began to trot—and that was awful! I simply screamed. The beast stopped at once. But I went on screaming till they got me off.

WARRINGTON. What did Geoffrey say?

ETHEL. Nothing. But he looked terrible. Oh, how he despised me!

WARRINGTON. Poor girl.

ETHEL. They brought me back, walking all the way. And Geoff offered to give up riding in the mornings if I liked. [WARRINGTON whistles] But, of course, I had to say no. So now they go out together every day, and often don't come back till lunch.

WARRINGTON. And what do you do?

ETHEL [wearily]. I sit at home and yawn and yawn. [Does so] Mrs. Cassilis takes me out driving sometimes. She does what she can to amuse me. But of course she's busy in the mornings.

WARRINGTON. What does Mrs. Borridge do?

ETHEL. Lady Marchmont looks after her. I believe she gets a kind of pleasure in leading her on and watching her make a fool of herself. Old cat! And mother sees nothing. She's as pleased with herself as possible. She's actually made Lady Marchmont promise to come and stay with us in London!

WARRINGTON. Bravo, Mrs. Borridge!

ETHEL. So I sit here in the drawing-room with a book or the newspaper and I'm bored! bored!

WARRINGTON. And Geoffrey?

ETHEL. He doesn't seem to notice. If I say anything to him about it he just says I'm not *well*! He's very kind and tries to find things to amuse me, but it's a strain. And so it goes on day after day. Heigho! [A short silence]

WARRINGTON. Well, my dear, I admire your courage.

ETHEL [surprised]. What do you mean?

WARRINGTON. A lifetime of this! Year in year out. Till you can yawn yourself decently into your grave.

ETHEL [alarmed]. But it won't always be like this. We sha'n't live here, Geoff and I.

WARRINGTON. Oh yes, you will. Mrs. Cassilis was talking only at dinner of the little house she was going to furnish for you both down here, just on the edge of the Park. So that you could always be near her.

ETHEL. But Geoff has his profession.

WARRINGTON. His profession is only a name. He makes nothing at it. And never will. Geoffrey's profession is to be a country gentleman and shoot pheasants.

ETHEL. But we shall have a house in London as well.

WARRINGTON [shaking his head]. Not you. As long as his mother lives Geoffrey will be dependent on her, you know. He has nothing worth calling an income of his own. And he's proud. He won't accept more from her than he's obliged even if her trustees would allow her to hand over anything substantial to him on his marriage—which they wouldn't.

ETHEL [defiantly]. I shall refuse to live down here.

WARRINGTON. My dear, you won't be asked. You'll have to live where Mrs. Cassilis provides a house for you. Besides, Geoff will prefer it. He likes the country, and he's devoted to his mother.

ETHEL. Phew!

WARRINGTON. Happily, it won't last for ever. I dare say you'll have killed poor Mrs. Cassilis off in a dozen years or so. Though you never know how long people will last nowadays, by the way. These modern doctors are the devil.

ETHEL. Kill her off? What mean? I don't want to kill Cassilis. I like her.

WARRINGTON [looking at her in astonishment]. My dear you—you don't suppose you'll be stand this sort of thing, do you? no. You'll kick over the trace there'll be no end of a scolding Geoff'll blow his brains out—got any—and she'll break her heart and that'll be the end of it.

ETHEL [fiercely]. It won't.

WARRINGTON. Oh yes, it will. I don't know what Country Society is. The dulness of it! How it eats your bones. I do.

ETHEL. Does it bore you too?

WARRINGTON. Bore? It bores me to tears! I'm not a bad lot. At least, no worse than most of the aged bachelors. But Julia thinks I'm an utterly abandoned character. I take care not to deceive her. Because I find Milverton so interesting. I used to come down every Christmas. One of those ghastly family reunions. A sort of wake without the corpses. At last I couldn't stand it, and I did something perfectly outrageous. I was warned, but I know the servants. I gave a warning. So now I'm supposed to be thoroughly disreputable, and Remenham won't have me at the house. Thank Heaven for that.

ETHEL. But Geoff likes the country.

WARRINGTON. I dare say. But Geoffrey and I are different. Geoffrey and you. You and I are different birds. He's a country bum who doesn't know the breed!

ETHEL [in horror]. And I shall have to stand this all my life! All my life! [Savagely] I won't! I won't!

WARRINGTON [calmly]. You won't.

ETHEL. I won't, I tell you! WARRINGTON shrugs. It's too silly. [Pause. She seems to think for a moment, then grasps him by the arm and speaks eagerly, dropping her voice.] I'm looking cautiously over towards the door. I say, let's go off to Paris, you and I, and leave all this. It'd be awful.

WARRINGTON [appalled, rising]. Hush! For God's sake. Julia!

ETHEL [almost in a whisper]. I won't. What does it matter to me? I go. You'd enjoy it like a bird. We'll have no end of a good time.

WARRINGTON [shaking himself desperately]. My dear young

I just told you that I'm not at all? I'm a perfectly reasonable person, of rather austere than otherwise.

L. Rot! You'll come?

[Grasping his arm again]

WARRINGTON. No, I won't. I de- can't go off with the girl my going to marry. It wouldn't be Besides, I don't want to go anybody.

[her spirits dropping to zero].
t't?

WARRINGTON [testily]. No, I won't. For goodness' sake, speak lower. Listening with all her ears.

[with a bitter little laugh].
Major Warrington! How I ou!

WARRINGTON. I should say you did. so young as I was. A few o, a little thing like that never e turn a hair. Now I can't

[subsiding into chair and wiping the perspiration from his brow]

L. You've gone through it be- n?

WARRINGTON. More than once, my

[dismally]. And now you'll n on me too.

WARRINGTON [trying to cheer her up].

contrary, I admire you im-

L. In fact, I don't know which e more, your pluck or your truly us self-control. To ask me to ith you without letting Julia [Looking anxiously towards her] asterly.

L [sighs]. Well, I suppose I ve to marry Geoff after all.

WARRINGTON. I suppose so. Un- could go off with the Rector.

[She laughs shrilly. The two ladies turn sharply and glare]

L. Now I've shocked your ain.

WARRINGTON. You have. She I'm flirting with you. That I sha'n't be asked down to on for another five years. Thank for that! Ah, here are the players.

[He rises, with a sigh of relief. The conversation has been amusing, but not without its perils, and he is not altogether sorry to have it safely over. ETHEL remains seated, and does not turn round. The billiard players

troop in, headed by MABEL, GEOFFREY holding open the door for them]

GEOFFREY. [To MABEL] You fluked outrageously, you know.

MABEL [entering]. I didn't!

GEOFFREY. Oh yes, you did. Didn't she, mother?

MRS. CASSILIS [smiling at her]. Dis- gracefully.

MRS. BORRIDGE. You'll soon learn, Lady Marchmont, if you practise a bit.

LADY MARCHMONT. Do you think so?

LADY REMENHAM. Well, who won, Rector?

MRS. BORRIDGE. I did.

LADY REMENHAM. Indeed?

[Turns frigidly away, losing all interest at once]

MRS. BORRIDGE [obstinately cheerful and friendly]. Why didn't you play, Mrs. 'Erris?

MRS. HERRIES [frigid smile]. I never play games.

MRS. BORRIDGE. You should learn. I'd teach you.

MRS. HERRIES [who longs to be as rude as LADY REMENHAM but has not quite the courage]. Thank you. I fear I have no time.

[Joins LADY REMENHAM again, ruffling her feathers nervously]

MRS. CASSILIS. Ethel, dear, we missed you sadly. I hope you haven't been dull?

ETHEL [with hysterical laugh]. Not at all. Major Warrington has been entertaining me.

RECTOR. I suspect Miss Borridge felt there would be no opponent worthy of her steel.

[ETHEL shrugs her shoulders rudely. He turns away]

MRS. CASSILIS [as a last resort]. I wonder if we could have some music now. Mabel, dear, won't you sing to us?

MABEL. I've got nothing with me.

GEOFFREY. Do sing, Mabel. There'll be lots of things you know here. [Opens the piano] Let me find something. Schumann?

MABEL [shakes head]. I think not.

[Joins him in searching music stand]

MRS. CASSILIS. Sing us that Schu- bert song you sang when we were dining with you last, dear.

MABEL. Very well. Where's Schu- bert, Geoffrey?

ETHEL. [To WARRINGTON] Do you see that?

[Watching GEOFFREY'S and MABEL'S heads in close proximity. Seems as if she were about to jump from her chair. WARRINGTON restrains her by a hand on her arm]

WARRINGTON. Sh! Be quiet, for heaven's sake.

ETHEL [hisses]. The little cat!

MABEL. Here it is. Geoff, don't be silly. [Turns to piano]

MRS. CASSILIS. Can you see there?

MABEL. Yes, thank you.

[She sings two verses of Schubert's "Adieu," in German, very simply, in a small but sweet voice. While she sings the behaviour of the guests affords a striking illustration of the English attitude towards music after dinner. GEOFFREY stands by piano prepared to turn over when required. LADY REMENHAM sits on sofa in an attitude of seraphic appreciation of her daughter's efforts. LADY MARCHMONT, by her side, is equally enthralled — and thinks of something else. MRS. HERRIES gently beats time with her fan. MRS. CASSILIS is sweetly appreciative. The BORRIDGES, on the contrary, fall sadly below the standard of polite attention required of them. ETHEL, who has begun by glaring defiantly at MABEL during the first few bars of the song, rapidly comes to the conclusion that she can't sing, and decides to ignore the whole performance. MRS. BORRIDGE begins by settling herself placidly to the task of listening. She is obviously puzzled and rather annoyed when the song turns out to be German, but decides to put up with it with a shrug, hoping it will soon be over. At the end of the first verse she turns to MRS. CASSILIS to begin to talk, but that lady, with a smile and a gesture, silences her, and the second verse begins. At this MRS. BORRIDGE'S jaw falls, and, after a few bars, she frankly addresses herself to slumber. Her purple, good-natured countenance droops upon her shoulder

as the verse proceeds, she wakes up at the end of a visible start. WARRINGTON, meantime, has disappeared in the eyes of his sister, and is seen only during the bars of the second verse, only been reduced to a stare by the stony glare which the forward keeps fixed upon the last bar. In self-defence, he leans back in his chair and templates the ceiling

GEOFFREY [clapping]. Bravo!

RECTOR. Charming, charming!

LADY MARCHMONT. [To LADY REMENHAM] What a sweet voice!

MRS. CASSILIS. Thank you!

RECTOR. [To MABEL, hearing her sing] We must have another.

GEOFFREY. Do, Mabel.

MABEL. No. That's quite enough.

RECTOR [with resolute front]. Miss Borridge, you sing, I'm sure.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Do, dear! [To LADY REMENHAM] My girl has a wonderful voice, Lady Remlin. It's like a professional. Old Joe at the Tiv. used to say she'd make her fortune in the 'alls.

LADY REMENHAM [frigidly].

ETHEL. I don't think I've any one here would care for.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Nonsense! You've lots of songs. Go on! "The Children's 'Ome."

ETHEL [rising]. Well, I'll sing you one like.

GEOFFREY [going to her]. Find you something, Ethel?

ETHEL [snaps]. No!

[GEOFFREY turns away and joins MABEL. She goes to the piano, where she has allowed a moment later. WARRINGTON, who stands by the piano, facing audience, and much amused as her sister proceeds. ETHEL takes up the piano. There is a pause while she darts a glance at GEOFFREY standing by MABEL. Then she makes up her mind, and preludes of any kind into the following refrain]

When Joey takes me for a wife,
my sister Lue,
'E puts 'is arms round both o' us,
as lots o' men will do.

't allow no liberties, and so we
s 'im plain,
ey says 'e's sorry — but 'e does
same again!

en) Well, we're not going to
that, you know. Not likely!
ot that sort. So we just says

at, Joey! Stow it, Joe!
at ticklin' when I tell yer toe.
too free to suit a girl like me,
u stop that ticklin' or I'll slap
!

oe an' me is man an' wife — I
aks 'e loves me true,
'll go on ticklin' me — and leave
ticklin' Lue.
ve to leave the girls alone, and
ad what 'e's about,
n' me an' Lucy 'ill precious soon
out.

en) Yes, I'm not going to put
that sort of thing once we're
. Not I. If 'e tries it on I
st sing out straight:

then, all of you.
Looks across impudently towards
LADY REMENHAM, who bristles
with indignation]

at, Joey! Chuck it, Joe!
at ticklin' when I tell yer toe.
too free to suit a girl like me,
u drop that ticklin' or I'll slap
!

Sings chorus fortissimo, joined
by her delighted mother and
by WARRINGTON, who beats
time sonorously on the top of
the piano. For this attention
she slaps him cordially on the
cheek at the last line, by way
of giving an artistic finish to
the situation, and then rises,
flushed and excited, and stands
by the piano, looking defiantly
at her horrified audience]

WARRINGTON. Splendid, by Jove!

That, however, is clearly not the
opinion of the rest of the lis-
teners, for the song has what
is called a "mixed" reception.
The ladies, for the most part,
had originally settled themselves
into their places prepared to
listen to anything which was

set before them with polite
indifference. A few bars, how-
ever, suffice to convince them of
the impossibility of that atti-
tude. LADY REMENHAM, who
is sitting on the sofa by LADY
MARCHMONT, exchanges a hor-
rified glance with that lady, and
with MRS. HERRIES on the
other side of the room. MABEL
looks uncomfortable. The
RECTOR feigns abstraction.
MRS. CASSILIS remains calm
and sweet, but avoids every one's
eye, and more particularly
GEOFFREY'S, who looks in-
tensely miserable. But WAR-
RINGTON enjoys himself thor-
oughly, even down to the final
slap, and as for MRS. BOR-
RIDGE, her satisfaction is un-
measured. She beats time to
the final chorus, wagging her
old head and joining in in
stentorian accents, finally jump-
ing up from her chair, clapping
her hands, and crying, "That's
right, Eth. Give 'em another."
In fact, she feels that the song
has been a complete triumph
for her daughter, and a startling
vindication of Old Jenkins's
good opinion of her powers.
Suddenly, however, she becomes
conscious of the horrified silence
which surrounds her. The
cheers die away on her lips.
She looks round the room, dazed
and almost frightened, then
hurriedly reseats herself in her
chair, from which she has risen
in her excitement, straightens
her wig, and — there is an
awful pause]

MRS. CASSILIS [feeling she must say
something]. Won't you come to the
fire, Ethel? You must be cold out
there.

ETHEL. Thank you, Mrs. Cassilis.
I'm not cold.

WARRINGTON. Jove, Miss Borridge,
I'd no idea you could sing like that.

ETHEL [with a sneer]. Nor had
Geoffrey.

LADY REMENHAM [rising]. Well, we
must be getting home. Geoffrey, will
you ask if the carriage is round?

GEOFFREY. Certainly, Lady Rem-
enham. [Rings]

MRS. HERRIES. We must be going,
too. Come, Hildebrand. [Rising also]

LADY REMENHAM. Are you coming with us, Mabel?

MRS. CASSILIS. Oh no, I can't spare Mabel yet. She has promised to stay a few days more.

LADY REMENHAM. Very well.

[Enter BUTLER]

GEOFFREY. Lady Remenham's carriage.

BUTLER. It's at the door, sir.

GEOFFREY. Very well.

[Exit BUTLER]

LADY REMENHAM. Good-bye, then, dear. Such a pleasant evening. Good night, Mabel. We shall expect you when we see you.

[General leave-takings]

MRS. HERRIES. Good-bye, Mrs. Cassilis.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Good night, Lady Remling.

[Holds out hand with nervous cordiality]

LADY REMENHAM. Good night.

[Sweeps past her with icy bow.

MRS. BORRIDGE retires crushed to a chair by fire, and consoles herself with illustrated paper]

LADY REMENHAM. [To WARRINGTON, who is devoting his last moments to MISS BORRIDGE]. Algernon.

WARRINGTON. Coming, Julia. [To ETHEL] See you in London, then?

GEOFFREY [stiffly]. You'll take another cigar, Warrington — to light you home?

WARRINGTON. Thanks. Don't mind if I do.

[GEOFFREY hands box]

LADY REMENHAM [sternly]. Algernon. We're going to get on our wraps.

[MRS. CASSILIS and LADY REMENHAM, MRS. HERRIES and the RECTOR, go out]

WARRINGTON. All right, Julia. I shall be ready as soon as you are.

GEOFFREY [motioning to whisky]. Help yourself, Warrington.

[Goes out after the others]

WARRINGTON. [To ETHEL, after helping himself to drink] Well, my dear, I'm afraid you've done it this time!

ETHEL. Done what?

WARRINGTON. Shocked them to some purpose! It was magnificent, but it was scarcely tactics, eh?

ETHEL. I suppose not. [Fiercely] But I wanted to shock them! Here have they been despising me all the

evening for nothing, and w— detestable girl with a voice like mouse sang her German jarg— ing her sky-high, I said I'd s— what singing means! And I—

WARRINGTON. You certainly! Ha! ha! You should have seen my face when you boxed my ears! The earth had opened her mouth and swallowed you up like Korah, and the other fellow, it could have opened wider than Julia's.

ETHEL. Well, she can see what she likes. She can't hurt me now.

WARRINGTON. I'm not so sure of that.

ETHEL. She'll have to learn. We go to-morrow.

WARRINGTON. Ah, I did not think so. Well, there's nothing like exploding a bomb before you leave, eh? It's not always safe — for the opportunity.

GEOFFREY [re-entering with a box]. The carriage is ready, Warrington. Lady Remenham's.

WARRINGTON. The deuce take it! [Swallows whisky and soda]

Good-bye again. Good-bye, Cassilis. A thousand thanks for the most interesting evening.

[WARRINGTON goes out with box] FREY. Pause. ETHEL looks sullen by fireplace]

MRS. BORRIDGE [yawning and looking tired]. Well, I think I shall turn in to-night, Mrs. Cassilis. [General shakes] Coming, Eth?

ETHEL. In a moment, mother.

[MRS. BORRIDGE waves with a parting smile]

MARCHMONT. Geoffrey turns from seeing Warrington off the premises. MARCHMONT wrings his hands passionately in passing]

LADY MARCHMONT. I must go too. And so must you, Mabel. Look tired out.

[Kisses MRS. CASSILIS] FREY opens door for MABEL.

MABEL. I am a little tired to-night.

[Exit LADY MARCHMONT and MABEL]

GEOFFREY. Are you going to bed, Mrs. Cassilis. Not at all. I have a couple of notes to write.

[GEOFFREY crosses to window] CASSILIS goes to window, sits facing away from Geoffrey, appears to begin to

GEOFFREY goes up to ETHEL thoughtfully. A silence. Then he speaks in a low tone]

FFREY. Ethel.

ETHEL. Yes. [Without looking up]

FFREY. Why did you sing that to-night?

ETHEL [with a sneer]. To please Remenham.

FFREY. But, Ethel! That's not sort of song Lady Remenham likes

ETHEL [impatiently]. To shock her,

FFREY. Ethel!

ETHEL. I think I managed it too!

FFREY. I don't understand. You're joking, aren't you?

ETHEL. Joking!

FFREY. I mean you didn't really on purpose to make Lady Remen-

angry. I'm sure you didn't.

ETHEL [very distinctly]. I tell you it on purpose, deliberately, to

shock Lady Remenham. I suppose I

to know.

FFREY [astonished]. But why? You made you do such a thing?

ETHEL [savagely]. I did it because I

thought it was that plain enough?

FFREY. Still, you must have had some reason. [No answer. Suspiciously]

What fellow Warrington tell you to do that?

ETHEL [snaps]. No.

FFREY. I thought perhaps . . . Now, promise me not to sing such

songs again here. [Silence] You will promise?

ETHEL. Pooh!

FFREY. Ethel, be reasonable. You must know you can't go on doing

that sort of thing here. When we are married we shall live down here. You

must conform to the ideas of the people

around you. They may seem to you

new and ridiculous, but you can't

change them.

ETHEL. You don't think them narrow and ridiculous, I suppose?

FFREY. No. In this case I think they are right. In many cases.

ETHEL. Sorry I can't agree with you.

FFREY [gently]. Ethel, dear, don't quarrel about a silly thing like

this. If you are going to marry me you must take my judgment on a matter

of this kind.

ETHEL [defiantly]. Must I?

FFREY. Yes.

ETHEL. Then I won't. So there.

I shall do just exactly as I please. And if you don't like it you can do the other thing. I'm not going to be bullied by you.

GEOFFREY [reasoning with her]. My dear Ethel, I'm sure I am never likely to bully you, or to do or say anything that is unkind. But on a point like this I can't give way.

ETHEL. Very well, Geoff. If you think that you'd better break off our engagement, that's all.

GEOFFREY. Ethel! [With horror]

ETHEL [impatiently]. Well, there's nothing to make faces about, is there?

GEOFFREY. You don't mean that. You don't mean you want our engage-

ment to come to an end!

ETHEL. Never mind what I want. What do you want?

GEOFFREY [astonished]. Of course I want it to go on. You know that.

ETHEL [gesture of despair]. Very well, then. You'd better behave ac-

cordingly. And now, if you've finished your lecture, I'll go to bed. Good

night.

[Is going out, with only a nod to

MRS. CASSILIS, but she kisses

her good night gently. GEOFFREY

holds door open for her to

go out, then goes and stands by

fire. MRS. CASSILIS, who has

watched this scene while ap-

pearing to be absorbed in her

notes, has risen to go to her

room]

MRS. CASSILIS [cheerfully]. Well, I must be off too! Good night, Geoffrey.

[Kisses him]

GEOFFREY [absently]. Good night, mother. [MRS. CASSILIS goes slowly

towards door] Mother.

MRS. CASSILIS [turning]. Yes, Geoff.

GEOFFREY. Mother, you don't think I was unreasonable in what I said to

Ethel, do you?

MRS. CASSILIS [seems to think it over]. No, Geoff.

GEOFFREY. Or unkind?

MRS. CASSILIS. No, Geoff.

GEOFFREY. I was afraid. She took it so strangely.

MRS. CASSILIS. She's rather over-excited to-night, I think. And tired, no doubt. [Encouragingly] She'll be

all right in the morning.

GEOFFREY. You think I did right to speak to her about that song?

MRS. CASSILIS. Quite right, dear. Dear Ethel still has a little to learn,

and, of course, it will take time. But we must be patient. Meantime, whenever she makes any little mistake, such as she made to-night, I think you should certainly speak to her about it. It will be such a help to her! I don't mean scold her, of course, but speak to her gently and kindly, just as you did to-night.

GEOFFREY [*despondently*]. It didn't seem to do any good.

MRS. CASSILIS. One never knows, dear. Good night.

[*Kisses him and goes out. He stands thoughtfully looking into the fire, and the curtain falls*]

ACT IV

SCENE. — *The morning-room at Deynham. Time, after breakfast next day. A pleasant room, with French windows at the back open on to the terrace. The sun is shining brilliantly. There is a door to hall on the left. On the opposite side of the room is the fireplace. When the curtain rises MABEL and GEOFFREY are on the stage. GEOFFREY stands by the fireplace. MABEL is standing by the open window. GEOFFREY looks rather out of sorts and dull.*

MABEL. What a lovely day!

GEOFFREY [*absently*]. Not bad.

[*Pulls out cigarette case*]

MABEL. I'm sure you smoke too much, Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY [*smiles*]. I think not.

[*Enter MRS. CASSILIS from hall*]

MRS. CASSILIS. Not gone out yet, dears? Why, Mabel, you've not got your habit on.

MABEL. We're not going to ride this morning.

MRS. CASSILIS [*surprised*]. Not going to ride?

MABEL. No. We've decided to stay at home to-day for a change.

MRS. CASSILIS. But why, dear?

MABEL [*hesitating*]. I don't know. We just thought so. That's all.

MRS. CASSILIS. But you must have some reason. You and Geoffrey haven't been quarrelling, have you?

MABEL [*laughing*]. Of course not.

MRS. CASSILIS. Then why aren't you going to ride?

MABEL. Well, we thought might be dull if we left her all

MRS. CASSILIS. Nonsense. I'll look after Ethel. Go up and both of you, at once. Ethel dreadfully grieved if you gave ride for her. Ethel's not self would never allow you or Geo give up a pleasure on her account.

[*Cross*]

GEOFFREY. Well, Mabel, you say? [*Going to window*] ripping day.

MABEL. If Mrs. Cassilis th

MRS. CASSILIS. Of course so. Run away, dears, and things on. I'll tell them to see the horses.

GEOFFREY. All right. Just hour. Come on, Mabel. I'll to the end of the passage.

[*They run out together, n setting footman who the same moment*]

MRS. CASSILIS. Lady Ma Mr. Geoffrey are going out. Tell them to send the horse. And tell Hallard I want to about those roses. I'm going garden now.

FOOTMAN. Very well, mada

[*Exit FOOTMAN. MRS. goes out into the garden moment later MRS. E and ETHEL come in hall*]

MRS. BORRIDGE [*looking ro going to easy-chair*]. Mrs. Cas here?

ETHEL [*sulkily*]. I dare s with the housekeeper.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Very likel up newspaper] Give me a there's a good girl. [*ETHEL Lady Marchmont isn't down suppose.*]

ETHEL. No. [*Tu*]

MRS. BORRIDGE [*putting down*]. What's the matter, dearie? awfully down.

ETHEL. Nothing.

[*Goes to window and s into the sunlight*]

MRS. BORRIDGE. I wish Marchmont came down to b of a morning.

ETHEL [*shrugs*]. Do you?

MRS. BORRIDGE. Yes. I without her. She and I are quite chummy.

ETHEL [*irritably, swinging*]

my! My dear mother, Lady Marchmont's only laughing at you.

MR. BORRIDGE. Nonsense, Ethel. Sing at me, indeed! I should like her!

ETHEL. That's just it, mother. You will.

MR. BORRIDGE. Pray, what do mean by that, miss?

ETHEL [hopeless]. Oh, it doesn't r.

[Goes to fireplace and leans arm on mantelpiece, depressed]

MR. BORRIDGE. Now you're sneering at me, and I won't 'ave it — have Silence! Do you 'ear?

ETHEL. Yes, I hear.

[Stares down at fender]

MR. BORRIDGE. Very well, then. let me 'ave any more of it.

[Sings to herself] Laughing, in- [Pause. Recovering her com-

ETHEL. I don't know.

MR. BORRIDGE. Out riding, I sup-

ETHEL. Very likely.

MR. BORRIDGE. 'E only finished fast just before us.

ETHEL. He, mother.

MR. BORRIDGE. Dear, dear, 'ow to go on! You leave my aitches They're all right.

ETHEL [signs]. I wish they were! e] You've not forgotten we're away to-day, mother?

MR. BORRIDGE. To-day? 'Oo says

ETHEL. We were only invited for a

MR. BORRIDGE. Were we, dearie? 't remember.

ETHEL. I do. There's a train at if you'll ask Mrs. Cassilis about marriage.

MR. BORRIDGE [flustered]. But I've et Jane know. She won't be ex- ing us.

ETHEL. We can telegraph.

MR. BORRIDGE. Can't we stay er day or two? I'm sure Mrs. lis won't mind. And I'm very ortable here.

ETHEL [firmly]. No, mother.

MR. BORRIDGE. Why not?

ETHEL [exasperated]. In the first because we haven't been asked. e second, because I don't want to.

MR. BORRIDGE. Don't want to?

ETHEL [snappishly]. No. I'm sick ired of this place.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Are you, dearie? I thought we were gettin' on first rate.

ETHEL. Did you? Anyhow, we're going, thank goodness, and that's enough. Don't forget to speak to Mrs. Cassilis. I'll go upstairs and pack.

[As she is crossing the room to go out MRS. CASSILIS enters from garden and meets her. She stops. MRS. CASSILIS kisses her affectionately]

MRS. CASSILIS. Going out, Ethel dear? Good morning.

[Greets MRS. BORRIDGE]

ETHEL. Good morning.

MRS. CASSILIS [putting her arm in ETHEL's and leading her up to window]. Isn't it a lovely day? I woke at five. I believe it was the birds singing under my window.

ETHEL. Did you, Mrs. Cassilis?

[Enter LADY MARCHMONT]

LADY MARCHMONT. Good morning, Adelaide. [Kisses her] Late again, I'm afraid.

[Shakes hands with ETHEL]

MRS. CASSILIS [sweetly]. Another of your headaches, dear? I'm so sorry.

LADY MARCHMONT [ignoring the re- buke]. Good morning, Mrs. Borridge. I hope you slept well.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Sound as a bell. But, then, I was always a onener to sleep. My old man, when 'e was alive, used to say 'e never knew any one sleep like me. And snore! Why 'e declared it kep' 'im awake 'alf the night. But I never noticed it.

LADY MARCHMONT [sweetly]. That must have been a great consolation for Mr. Borridge.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Your 'usband snore?

LADY MARCHMONT [laughing]. No.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Thinks it's low per'aps. . . . They used to say snorin' comes from sleepin' with your mouth open, but I don't know. What do you think?

LADY MARCHMONT. I really don't know, dear Mrs. Borridge. I must think it over.

[LADY MARCHMONT takes chair by MRS. BORRIDGE. They converse in dumb show. ETHEL and MRS. CASSILIS come down stage]

MRS. CASSILIS. What a pretty blouse you've got on to-day, dear.

ETHEL. Is it, Mrs. Cassilis?

MRS. CASSILIS. Sweetly pretty. It goes so well with your eyes. You've lovely eyes, you know.

ETHEL. Do you think so?

MRS. CASSILIS. Of course. So does Geoff.

ETHEL [*disengaging herself*]. Oh, Geoff—Well, I must go upstairs. [*To MRS. BORRIDGE in passing*] Don't forget, mummy. [*Exit ETHEL*]

MRS. BORRIDGE. What, dearie? Oh yes. Ethel says we must be packin' our traps, Mrs. Cassilis.

MRS. CASSILIS [*startled*]. Packing?

MRS. BORRIDGE. Yes. She says we mustn't outstay our welcome. She's proud, is my girlie.

MRS. CASSILIS [*with extreme cordiality*]. But you're not thinking of leaving us? Oh, you mustn't do that. Geoff would be so disappointed. And so should I.

MRS. BORRIDGE. I don't want to go, I'm sure. Only Ethel said—

MRS. CASSILIS. There must be some mistake. I counted on you for quite a long visit.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Ethel said we were only asked for a week.

MRS. CASSILIS. But that was before I really knew you, wasn't it? It's quite different now.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*purring delightedly*]. If you feel that, Mrs. Cassilis—

MRS. CASSILIS. Of course I feel it. I hope you'll stay quite a long time yet.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*complacent, appealing to LADY MARCHMONT, who nods sympathy*]. There! I told Ethel how it was.

MRS. CASSILIS [*anxious*]. Ethel doesn't want to go, does she?

MRS. BORRIDGE. Oh no. She'd be delighted to stop on. Only she thought—

MRS. CASSILIS [*determined to leave MRS. BORRIDGE no opportunity to hedge*]. Very well, then. That's settled. You'll stay with us till Geoff and I go to Scotland. That won't be till the middle of August. You promise?

MRS. BORRIDGE. Thank you, Mrs. Cassilis. I call that *real* hospitable! [*Rising*] And now I'll run upstairs and tell my girl, or she'll be packing my black satin before I've time to stop her. She's so 'asty. And I always say nothing spoils things like packing, especially satins. They do crush so.

[MRS. BORRIDGE *waddles*]
As soon as the door closes
CASSILIS heaves a deep
relief, showing how alarmed
had been lest the BORRIDGE
should really take their departure.
For a moment there is silence.
Then LADY MARCHMONT
has watched this scene with
appreciation of its ironical
humour, speaks]

LADY MARCHMONT. How you
that old woman!

MRS. CASSILIS. So do you, dearie.

LADY MARCHMONT. Yes. I
make me as great a hypocrite as
self before you're done. When
first began I was shocked at you
now I feel a dreadful spirit of emu-
stealing over me.

MRS. CASSILIS [*grimly*]. I
always a satisfaction in doing
well, isn't there?

LADY MARCHMONT. You must
then.

MRS. CASSILIS. Thanks.

LADY MARCHMONT [*puzzled*].
really want these dreadful people
stay all that time?

MRS. CASSILIS. Certainly.
come back, if necessary, in October.

LADY MARCHMONT. Good heavens!
Why?

MRS. CASSILIS [*sitting*]. My
Margaret, as long as that woman
her daughter are here we must
Geoffrey out of their clutch
thought we should manage it last
Last night was a terrible dis-
ment for him, poor boy. But
wrong. It was too soon.

LADY MARCHMONT. By the way,
what did that amusing wretch
Warrington, advise?

MRS. CASSILIS. I didn't
him. I'd no opportunity. Beside,
couldn't have trusted him. He
have gone over to the enemy.

LADY MARCHMONT. Yes. He
evidently attracted to the girl.

MRS. CASSILIS. I suppose so.
Warrington isn't fastidious where
are concerned.

LADY MARCHMONT. Still, he
of course.

MRS. CASSILIS. Only what
Remenham would have told
However, his visit wasn't alto-
wasted, I think.

LADY MARCHMONT. That son
mean?

CASSILIS. Yes. He gave poor glimpse of the Paradise she is her back on for ever. London, all songs, rackety bachelors. It made her reckless. The contrast between Major Warrington and, dear Rector, can hardly fail to come home to her.

conversation is interrupted by entrance of ETHEL, in the worst tempers. MRS. CASSILIS is on guard at once]

L [bursting out]. Mrs. Cassi-

CASSILIS [very sweetly, rising and her]. Ethel, dear, what is this? You're not going to run away

L [doggedly]. Indeed we must, Cassilis. You've had us for a while. We really mustn't stay any

CASSILIS. But, my dear, it's not to have you.

BORRIDGE [who has followed her daughter and now enters, and rather breathless]. There, dearie! What did I tell you?

CASSILIS. Geoff would be distressed if you went away. I think I hadn't made you comfortable. He'd scold me dreadfully.

L. I don't think Geoff will care.

MRS. BORRIDGE appeals mutely for sympathy to LADY MARCHMONT, who hastens to give it in full measure]

CASSILIS [great solicitude]. My dear, you've not had any little difference off? Any quarrel?

L. No.

CASSILIS. I was so afraid —

L. Still, we oughtn't to plant on you in this way.

BORRIDGE. Plant ourselves! dearie, how can you say such things. Plant ourselves!

. Oh, do be quiet, mother.

[Stamps her foot]

CASSILIS [soothing her]. Any- can't possibly go to-day. The

has gone to Branscombe, and horse has cast a shoe. And

there's a dinner-party at home. You'll stay for that?

You're very kind, Mrs. Cassilis

CASSILIS [leaving her no time to

That's right, my dear.

. And next week we'll have

some young people over to meet you, and you shall dance all the evening.

MRS. BORRIDGE. There, Ethel!

ETHEL [hopeless]. Very well. If you really wish it.

MRS. CASSILIS. Of course I wish it. I'm so glad. I sha'n't be able to part with you for a long time yet.

[Kisses her tenderly. But ETHEL seems too depressed to answer to these blandishments]

LADY MARCHMONT [under her breath]. Really, Adelaide!

MRS. CASSILIS [sweetly]. Into the garden, did you say, Margaret? [Taking her up towards window] Very well. The sun is tempting, isn't it?

[MRS. CASSILIS and her sister sail out. ETHEL and her mother remain, the former in a condition of frantic exasperation]

ETHEL. Well, mother, you've done it!

MRS. BORRIDGE [snapping. She feels she is being goaded unduly]. Done what, dearie?

ETHEL [impatiently]. Oh, you know.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Do you mean about staying on here? But what could I do? Mrs. Cassilis wouldn't let us go. You saw that yourself.

ETHEL. You might have stood out.

MRS. BORRIDGE. I did, dearie. I stood out as long as ever I could. But she wouldn't hear of our goin'. You saw that yourself.

ETHEL. Well, mother, don't say I didn't warn you, that's all.

MRS. BORRIDGE. Warn me, dearie?

ETHEL [breaking out]. That I was tired of this place. Sick and tired of it! That it was time we were moving.

MRS. BORRIDGE [placidly]. Is that all? I'll remember. [Pause] How far did you get with the packing?

ETHEL [impatiently]. I don't know.

MRS. BORRIDGE. You hadn't packed my black satin?

ETHEL. I don't know. Yes, I think so. I'm not sure. Don't worry, mother.

MRS. BORRIDGE [lamentably]. It'll be simply covered with creases. I know it will. Run up at once, there's a good girl, and shake it out.

ETHEL [snaps]. Oh, bother!

MRS. BORRIDGE. Then I must. How tiresome girls are! Always in the tantrums!

[Poor old MRS. BORRIDGE ambles out grumbling. ETHEL, left

alone, sits scowling furiously at the carpet and biting her nails. There is a considerable pause, during which her rage and weariness are silently expressed. Then GEOFFREY and MABEL enter, quite cheerful, in riding things. They make a curious contrast to the almost tragic figure of sulkiness which meets their eyes]

GEOFFREY [cheerfully]. Hullo, Ethel! There you are, are you?

ETHEL [sulky]. You can see me, I suppose.

MABEL. We didn't get our ride after all.

ETHEL. Didn't you? [Turns away]

MABEL. No. Basil has strained one of his sinews, poor darling. He'll have to lie up for a day or two.

GEOFFREY. Isn't it hard luck? It would have been such a glorious day for a ride. We were going round by Long Winton and up to Tenterden's farm and ——

ETHEL [snaps]. You needn't trouble to tell me. I don't want to hear.

[There is an awkward pause after this explosion]

MABEL. I think I'll go up and change my habit, Geoff.

[GEOFFREY nods, and MABEL goes out. GEOFFREY after a moment goes up to ETHEL, and lays a hand gently on her shoulder]

GEOFFREY. What is it, Ethel? Is anything the matter?

ETHEL [shaking him off fiercely]. Please don't touch me.

GEOFFREY. Something has happened. What is it?

ETHEL [savagely]. Nothing's happened. Nothing ever does happen here.

[GEOFFREY tries to take her hand. She pulls it pettishly away. He slightly shrugs his shoulders. A long pause. He rises slowly and turns towards door]

ETHEL [stopping him]. Geoff!

GEOFFREY. Yes.

[Does not turn his head]

ETHEL. I want to break off our engagement.

GEOFFREY [swinging round, astonished, and not for a moment taking her seriously]. My dear girl!

ETHEL. I think it would be better. Better for both of us.

GEOFFREY [still rallying her]. one ask why?

ETHEL. For many reasons don't let us go into all that. you release me and there's an

GEOFFREY [more serious]. Ethel. What is the matter? you well?

ETHEL [impatiently]. I'm well.

GEOFFREY. I don't think You look quite flushed. I will take more exercise. You'd be much better.

ETHEL [goaded to frenzy by meant suggestion, GEOFFREY's for all human ills]. Geoffrey simply maddening. Do please stand that I know when I'm when I'm ill. There's nothing ever the matter with me. you think everything in life right if only every one took a every morning and spent the the day shooting partridges.

GEOFFREY [quite simply]. there's a lot in that, isn't there

ETHEL. Rubbish!

GEOFFREY [struck by a brilliant idea]. It's not that silly business a riding again, is it?

ETHEL [almost hysterical with operation]. Oh, no! no! Please believe that I'm not a child, and know what I'm saying. I want off our engagement. I don't think suited to each other.

GEOFFREY [piqued]. This sudden, isn't it?

ETHEL [sharply]. How do you it's sudden?

GEOFFREY. But isn't it?

ETHEL. No. It's not.

GEOFFREY [struck by a brilliant idea]. Ethel, has my mother ——?

ETHEL. Your mother has whatever to do with it.

GEOFFREY. She hasn't said anything?

ETHEL. Your mother has been saying that's kind and good. if it hadn't been for her I think have broken it off before. But I want to hurt her.

[GEOFFREY rises, and goes into room up and down for a moment in thought. Then he returns to her again]

GEOFFREY. Ethel, you must come to a decision like this hastily must take time to consider.

HEL. Thank you. My mind is made up.

OFFREY. Still, you might think for a day or two — a week, perhaps. It *[hesitates]* . . . it wouldn't be for me to take you at your word my way.

HEL. Why not?

OFFREY *[hesitates]*. You might — it afterwards.

HEL *[with a short laugh]*. You're modest.

OFFREY *[nettled]*. Oh, I'm not enough to imagine that you would anything to regret in me. I'm a commonplace fellow enough. But there are other things which a girl has to consider in marriage, aren't there? Money. If you broke off our engagement now, mightn't you regret later on *[slight touch of bitterness]*, never little you regret me?

HEL *[touched]*. Geoff, dear, I'm not hurting you. I didn't mean to. You're a good fellow. Far too good for me. And I know you mean it when you ask me to take time, to think of all that. But my mind's quite made up. Don't let's say any more about it.

OFFREY *[slowly, and a little sadly]*. You don't love me any more, then?

HEL. No. *[Decisively]* I don't love you any more. Perhaps I never loved you really, Geoff. I don't

OFFREY. I loved you, Ethel.

HEL. I wonder.

OFFREY. You know I did.

HEL. You thought you did. But it's not always the same thing, is it? For a girl takes a man's fancy for a moment. Yet people say one only loves once, don't they? *[Pause]*

OFFREY *[hesitating again]*. Ethel, I don't know how to say it. . . . I can't laugh at me again. . . . But you're sure you're not doing this on my account?

HEL. On your account?

OFFREY. Yes. To spare me. I suppose you think I ought to marry in my own class, as Lady Remenham might say?

HEL. No.

OFFREY. Quite sure?

HEL *[nods]*. Quite. *[Turns away]*

OFFREY *[frankly puzzled]*. Then I don't understand it!

HEL *[turning on him impatiently]*. Dear Geoff, is it impossible for you

to understand that I don't want to marry you? That if I married you I should be bored to death? That I loathe the life down here among your highly respectable friends? That if I had to live here with you I should yawn myself into my grave in six months?

GEOFFREY *[astonished]*. Don't you like Deynham?

ETHEL. No. I detest it. Oh, it's pretty enough, I suppose, and the fields are very green, and the view from Milverton Hill is much admired. And you live all alone in a great park, and you've horses and dogs, and a butler and two footmen. But that's not enough for me. I want life, people, lots of people. If I lived down here I should go blue-mouldy in three weeks. I'm town-bred, a true cockney. I want streets and shops and gas lamps. I don't want your carriages and pair. Give me a penny omnibus.

GEOFFREY. Ethel!

ETHEL. Now you're shocked. It is vulgar, isn't it? But I'm vulgar. And I'm not ashamed of it. Now you know.

[Another pause. GEOFFREY, in pained surprise, ponders deeply. At last he speaks]

GEOFFREY. It's all over, then?

ETHEL *[nodding flippantly]*. All over and done with. I surrender my claim to everything, the half of your worldly goods, of your mother's worldly goods, of your house, your park, your men-servants and maid-servants, your aristocratic relations. Don't let's forget your aristocratic relations. I surrender them all. There's my hand on it.

[Stretches it out]

GEOFFREY *[pained]*. Don't, Ethel.

ETHEL *[with genuine surprise]*. My dear Geoff, you don't mean to say you're sorry! You ought to be flinging your cap in the air at regaining your liberty. Why, I believe there are tears in your eyes! Actually tears! Let me look. *[Turns his face to her]*

GEOFFREY *[pulling it away sulkily]*. You don't suppose a fellow likes being thrown over like this, do you?

ETHEL. Vanity, my dear Geoff. Mere vanity.

GEOFFREY *[hotly]*. It's not!

ETHEL *[suddenly serious]*. Geoff, do you want our engagement to go on? Do you want to marry me still? *[He turns to her impulsively]* Do you love

me still? [*Checks him*] No, Geoff. Think before you speak. On your honour! [*GEOFFREY is silent*] There, you see! Come, dear, cheer up. It's best as it is. Give me a kiss. The last one. [*She goes to GEOFFREY and holds up her face to be kissed. He kisses her on the forehead*] And now I'll run upstairs and tell mother. [*Laughs*] Poor mother! Won't she make a shine!

[*ETHEL goes out recklessly. GEOFFREY, left alone, looks round the room in a dazed way. Takes out cigarette-case automatically, goes to writing-table for match. Just as he is lighting cigarette* MRS. CASSILIS enters from garden, followed a moment later by LADY MARCHMONT. He throws cigarette away unlighted]

MRS. CASSILIS. All alone, Geoffrey?

GEOFFREY. Yes, mother.

MRS. CASSILIS. Where's Ethel?

GEOFFREY. Mother — Ethel's . . .

[*Sees LADY MARCHMONT. Pause*] Good morning, Aunt Margaret.

LADY MARCHMONT. Good morning.

MRS. CASSILIS. Well, dear?

GEOFFREY. Mother [*plunging into his subject*], a terrible thing has happened. Ethel was here a moment ago, and she has broken off our engagement.

LADY MARCHMONT. Broken it off!

MRS. CASSILIS [*immensely sympathetic*]. Broken it off, dear? Surely not?

GEOFFREY. Yes.

MRS. CASSILIS. Oh, poor Geoffrey. [*Going to him*] Did she say why?

GEOFFREY [*dully*]. Only that it had all been a mistake. She was tired of it all, and didn't like the country, and — that's all, I think.

MRS. CASSILIS [*anxious*]. My poor boy. And I thought her so happy with us. [*Laying hand caressingly on his shoulder as he sits with head bowed*] You don't think we've been to blame — I've been to blame — in any way, do you? Perhaps we ought to have amused her more.

GEOFFREY. Not you, mother. You've always been sweet and good to her. Always. She said so.

MRS. CASSILIS. I'm glad of that, dear.

[*Enter MRS. BORRIDGE, furiously angry, followed by ETHEL, vainly trying to detain or silence her. GEOFFREY retreats up stage, where MRS. BOR-*

RIDGE for a moment does n
him]

MRS. BORRIDGE [*raging*]. Geoff? Leave me alone, Ethel. Geoff?

ETHEL. He's not here, moth
Mrs. Cassilis is. Do be quiet!

GEOFFREY [*coming between*]. I'm here. What is it, Mrs. Bo

MRS. BORRIDGE. Oh, Geoff
is this Ethel's been telling m
haven't reely broke off your
ment, have you?

ETHEL. Nonsense, mother.
it off, as I told you.

MRS. BORRIDGE. But you
mean it, dearie. It's all a
Just a little tiff.

ETHEL [*firmly*]. No!

MRS. BORRIDGE [*obstinately*].
it is. It'll blow over. You
be so unkind to poor Geoffy.

ETHEL. Mother, don't be
It doesn't take anybody in
upstairs and let's get on w
packing.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*stamps f*].
quiet, Ethel, when I tell you
Marchmont, won't you speak
Undutiful girl. I should like
her! [*ETHEL turns away in*

LADY MARCHMONT [*soothingly*].
well, dear Mrs. Borridge, perha
people know best about these t

MRS. BORRIDGE [*excited and*].
Know best! know best! How
they know best? They don
anything. They're as ignorant
are uppish. [*Growing tearful*]
think 'ow I've worked for th
'Ow I've slaved for 'er, denie
for 'er. [*Breaking down*] I
want 'er to be respectable.
always been respectable mysel
know the value of it.

[*Subsides into chair, alm
terical, and no longer
what she is saying*]

ETHEL. Oh, hush, mother!

MRS. BORRIDGE [*angry ag*].
won't 'ush, so there! I'm you
and I won't be trod on. I find
to marry you — a better ma
ever you'll find for yourself,
and this is 'ow I'm treated!

[*Begi*

ETHEL [*taking her arm*].
mother, do come away.

MRS. BORRIDGE [*breaking d*].
gether]. And now to 'ave to

again. And young men ain't so
as they used to be. Not by a
way. They're cunning most of
. They take a deal of catchin'.
I'm gettin' an old woman. Oh,
night 'ave spared me this.

RS. CASSILIS [*almost sorry for her*].
Borridge — Mrs. Borridge.

RS. BORRIDGE [*refusing to be com-
[. But she's no natural affection.
's what it is. She doesn't love 'er
er. She's 'eadstrong and wilful,
never paid the least attention to
I told 'er. [Burst of tears] But
think she might 'ave let 'im break
. Then there'd 'ave been a breach
omise, and that's always something.
's what I always say to girls:
ve them to break it off, dearies.
then there'll be a breach of promise
damages." That's if you've got
thing on paper. But [*fresh burst*
ars] she never would get anything
paper. She never paid the least
d to her old mother. She's an
tiful girl, and that's 'ow it is.*

[*Goes off into incoherent sobs*]

UTLER. Lady Remenham.

RS. CASSILIS [*rising hastily*]. The
ing-room, Watson.

[*She is, however, too late to stop*

WATSON from showing in LADY
REMENHAM]

DY REMENHAM [*sailing in, with
y cheerfulness*]. How do you do,
aide? How do you do, Margaret?
just driven Algernon to the station,
I thought I'd leave this for you
passed.

[*Gives book*]

RS. BORRIDGE. She's an undutiful
hter. That's what she is.

[*Snorting and sobbing*]

LADY REMENHAM [*perceiving for the*

*first time that something unusual is going
on*]. Eh?

MRS. CASSILIS. Mrs. Borridge is
not quite herself just now. Dear Ethel
has decided that she does not wish to
continue her engagement to my son,
and Mrs. Borridge has only just heard
the news.

LADY REMENHAM [*scarcely able to be-
lieve her ears*]. Not wish ———!

MRS. CASSILIS [*hastily, checking her*].
No. This has naturally upset us all
very much. It was so very sudden.

LADY REMENHAM. Well, I must
say —

[*Luckily she does not do so, but
takes refuge in silence*]

MRS. BORRIDGE [*burst of grief*]. Oh,
why didn't she get something on paper?
Letters is best. Men are that slippy!
I always told her to get something on
paper.

[*Breaks down completely*]

ETHEL. Come away, mother. [*Takes
her firmly by the arm*] Will you please
order the carriage, Mrs. Cassilis?

[*Leads MRS. BORRIDGE off, sob-
bing and gulping to the last*]

LADY REMENHAM [*sitting down, with
a triumphant expression on her amiable
countenance*]. Geoffrey, will you tell
the coachman to drive round to the
stables? I shall stay to luncheon.

[*It is impossible adequately to
represent the tone in which
LADY REMENHAM announces
this intention. It is that of a
victorious general occupying the
field, from which he has beaten
the enemy with bag and baggage.
Luckily, GEOFFREY is too de-
pressed to notice anything. He
goes out without a word — and
the curtain falls*]

THE MADRAS HOUSE ·

(1910)

BY GRANVILLE BARKER

GRANVILLE BARKER

THERE are three factors that confronted the British stage before the War: one, which was about to give way before imagination and spirituality; the second, for a repertory or National Theatre; and George Bernard Shaw. The first has threatened to leave Arthur Wing Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones in the rear as they, with their "Tanqueray", and "Ebb-smith", and "Saints and Sinners", left Tom Robertson with "Caste."

First and foremost, the young coterie, that attracted the attention of London re-goers during the past two decades, is a literary group, — intent on bridging up that, for so long a time, separated the stage and literature. Their plays were generally published before or simultaneously with production. The dialogue was polished and fluent; the stage directions have a literary character reflective of the style of the psychological novelist. These men have been consciously working in a world having a history which began with the early attempts to introduce Ibsen to the too willing English public. The British dramatist of to-day is the product of a conscious movement for the betterment of the British stage.

ter Edmund Gosse and William Archer had emphatically pointed to Ibsen as the coming man in the theatre, critics were prompted to plead for the "drama as." Managers had only just ceased looking askance at the feminism of Ibsen, who was being accepted by the English public. Jones was struggling to give Ibsen a place on the stage, and to win for the English dramatist the right to discuss any topic, unhampered by the censor. Ibsen, respecter of no nationality, put a torpedo beneath the English ark. "A Doll's House" was produced in 1889.

George Bernard Shaw, then only a Fabian, a vegetarian, an art and dramatic critic and a novelist, heard the percussion, and it gave him a new form of creative impulse. J. T. Grein, until then only a dramatic critic interested in the careers of Glynis and Jones, became owner of the Independent Theatre, and thereafter he was in earnest the experimental movement which led to Galsworthy, Massingham, and C. K. Scott. The marker.

What was it that Grein did? With scarcely enough money to open a bank account and with the example of Antoine, in Paris, before him, he produced "Ghosts" for the members of his Independent Society. This was in 1891. In the writing of the play, Ibsen had seared his own soul; no wonder torrents of abuse fell upon Grein and upon his theatre! But behind him stood Meredith, Hardy, Pinero, Jones, and even Harris. Moreover, he was on the eve of a great discovery. In 1893, Grein produced "Widower's Houses", the first play by George Bernard Shaw. The Independent Theatre ceased to be, however, in 1897. The experiment was useful; it proved that a cultural theatre has a specialized audience, and that such a theatre can hardly be self-supporting.

such audiences as Grein appealed to needed to be organized. In 1899, the Society—the first concerted attempt to institute a repertory theatre in

London — was founded. It did not succeed in its endeavour, but it did fan the British play-goers with the works of Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Hauptmann, Brieux, and Sudermann. Moreover, it threw a spotlight upon the foolish policy of the English censor. For, through the unprofessional character of the Society, its members were able to defy the Reader of Plays, presenting "Vanna", "Mrs. Warren's Profession", and other dramas which would have refused a license in the regular playhouse. What is more, the Stage Society had the strength of the dramatists of the English dramatic renaissance. In every way it defied English convention which interfered with the advancement of ideas of art. It even shocked the public by giving its plays on Sunday.

Among the members of the Stage Society were Shaw, St. John Hankin, and Barker. Of the three, Shaw may be considered the leader in the next step in the dramatic evolution. He propounded the rules, and largely established the form of the literary drama that flourishes in England to-day.

The Stage Society had as its definite object:

To promote and encourage dramatic art; to serve as an experimental theatre; to provide such an organization as shall be capable of dealing with any opportunities that may present themselves or be created for the establishment in London of a Repertory Theatre.

Though it accomplished much by these performances, it has been surpassed by other organizations more potent in the independent and progressive development of the British dramatist. With the advent of the Court Theatre, in 1904, came the almost conscious declaration of the new dramatists to follow the banner of realism. Fresh from producing plays for the Stage Society, Granville Barker came over to the Court Theatre, then under the management of J. H. Leigh, and presented to assist in the mounting and presentation of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona", provided Vedrenne would aid him in giving six matinees of "Candida." From this proposal and acceptance there came into being the Vedrenne-Barker alliance. On April 26, 1904, the playhouse of the "New Drama" was launched, pledged, as its historian, Desmond MacCarthy, declares, to the exploitation of *truth* rather than of *effect*. The Court Theatre had excellent plays of wide scope and variety — plays that never would have found encouragement through ordinary theatrical channels. It ranged foreign dramatists alongside the "New Drama" of England. It even popularized Greek drama, with the able assistance of Professor Gilbert Murray. Within its limitations, of which a dependence upon Shaw was one, it was a vindication of the art theatre, and for three years it paid its way. It was followed, in the English striving for an endowed theatre, by the Frohman repertory experiment, in which Shaw, Barrie, Galsworthy, Maeterlinck, Barker, and others, had their share.

The policy of the Court Theatre did not materially depart from that of the Stage Society. It was, however, for the public rather than for members of the organization, and its performances were of a higher artistic quality.

In the fall of 1907, the movement was transferred to the Savoy Theatre. Shaw, Galsworthy, and Euripides were the attractions. But the house was too small, and some of the intimacy of the Court Theatre was lost. This, and the refusal of the censor to license Barker's "Waste", caused the final dissolution of the Vedrenne-Barker combination. The experiment proved two things: first, that the

is an intimate drama, relying for its appreciation on the sympathy of a small audience; second, that its progressiveness had to fight against the censor, regarding the latter to be an anachronism, nowhere better realized than in the case of a meeting between the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and House of Commons on stage plays, wherein the leading dramatists and actors gave their evidence as to the pernicious effect of censorship. This report was published on November 2, 1909.

Such is the history of the movement which gave rise to, and fostered, the "New Drama" in England. It shows a breaking away from the Victorian régime. It is due to a definite continental influence. It was to result in further brilliant experiments on the part of Granville Barker as a stage producer. Throughout this period of intellectual unrest, personality has had a large opportunity to assert itself. There have been sponsors for ideas, as well as for dramatists. Had it not been for Lugné-Poe's marionette plays would have lacked appreciation in France. The drama was nurtured in England by Grein, on the one hand, and through the enthusiasm of such players as Miss Janet Achurch and Mr. Charles Carrington. George Bernard Shaw — a school unto himself — who has made it possible for Galsworthy, Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Field, Barker, and McEvoy to come to the fore. And they have come with their own conceptions; each of them with character to draw and with something to say. The men, working for the "New Drama", have stated in definite terms what that "New Drama" is. Galsworthy writes:

Our drama is renascent, and nothing will stop its growth. It is not renascent because this or that man is writing, but because of a new spirit

Shaw has declared that after all the "New Drama" is nothing more than a debate on the betterment of life in general, and that George Bernard Shaw is the only one to put it into the three hours traffic of his thesis play, he puts in his preface. Granville Barker believes that the future of the "New Drama" is dependent on endowment. St. John Hankin wrote frankly that the "New Drama", as represented by Galsworthy, Maeterlinck, and himself, alone would have brought the Court Theatre to immediate financial ruin; but he added:

Art, and especially dramatic art, never is and never can be "independent" in any real sense. The drama depends, and must always depend, upon its audiences, upon its "patrons" in fact. . . . And the only difference between the commercial theatre and the endowed theatre is that whereas the latter depends upon its existence on one patron, the former depends upon many. . . .

And in substance he continued further: A patron can give the public the opportunity of discovering whether or not they like a play. They can have time to consider whether they like it. The fatal thing about the London Theatre as it is organized to-day is that plays must succeed at once.

There are two channels for the British drama to pass through, said Galsworthy, long before the Great War, the first that of naturalism, which

is vital . . . is in every respect as dependent on imagination, construction, selection, and elimination — the main laws of artistry — as ever was the romantic or rhapsodic play;

second, a poetic prose drama,

emotionalizing us by its diversity and purity of form and invention, . . . v
 province will be to disclose the elemental soul of man and the forces of Na
 not perhaps as the old tragedies disclosed them, not necessarily in the
 mood, but always with beauty and in the spirit of discovery.

Read Shaw's preface to the Brieux plays, and you will find what he the
 interpreting life; for, according to him, it is the business of every drama
 alone of Brieux,

to pick out the significant incidents from the chaos of daily happenings
 arrange them so that their relation to one another becomes significant,
 changing us from bewildered spectators of a monstrous confusion to me
 telligently conscious of the world and its destinies.

Granville Barker has figured prominently in the history of the English s
 just outlined. Like the rest of the new dramatists, he is after truth also;
 literary quality dominates, and makes subservient, the drama elements in his
 This is strange, since he is one of the British playwrights who has had mos
 with the stage as an actor and as a manager. His best play, from the stan
 of a complete story, is "The Voysey Inheritance" (1905), quite as full of d
 his other plays, but complete in the sense that it finishes one phase of th
 ment: that business dishonesty may be made to seem honest. In anothe
 — the dramatic one — the play ends just when we are most anxious to kno
 the son will do with his terrible inheritance.

As a disciple of Shaw, Barker carries his stage directions and his min
 of stage description to the point which links the modern thesis play with th
 istic novel. He excels in this method of analysis. He is able, through hi
 directions, as well as through his dialogue, to give one a complete sense
 vitality of certain slices of British life. Without class distinction to worl
 Barker, previous to the War, would have been at a loss to know what to write
 So clever is he in his observation, so incisive in his satire, that he could h
 interest while presenting several phases of the same subject, as in "The l
 House" (1910). He is of that school of dramatists represented by
 McEvoy, whose "David Ballard" (1907) is a striking example of the midd
 drama which has come out of this realistic group of playwrights.

Barker has not caught from Shaw the full unity of the thesis plot. His pl
 photographic, human likenesses, caught with an exceptionally fine lens. So
 is he in his observation and in his interest, that such a play as "Waste" (190
 much of its meaning, by reason of the necessity, on the part of the audience, t
 fully the political conditions treated, before being able to understand th
 of the plot.

In his play writing, he has been as experimental as he has been in every
 of interest which has attracted him to the theatre. One is inclined to belie
 in "Prunella" Laurence Housman's touch of collaboration was the poet
 Barker's the constructive. In "Anatol", one is able to note how truly a tra
 or an adapter may accomplish his task, by the deft way in which Barker w
 to catch the effervescent spirit of Schnitzler in his episodic adventures of A

One must, in order to measure Barker's true position, identify him w
 experimental side of the English stage. As an actor, he was able to learn fu

tials of his art in the various companies with which he identified himself, from until he began producing. He toured with Ben Greet in Shakespeare. He d with the Elizabethan Stage Society in Shakespeare. Then his career became fied with that of the experimental theatre of England. He developed mi- y under the kindly inspiration of Shaw, becoming a Fabian Socialist, and there doubt that his type of mind might have been other than it was, had he not been nced by the arch-dramatist of the thesis school. That influence is felt in ste" more than in any of his other dramas.

ne experimental idea naturally turned Barker's thoughts toward the best s of supporting the "New Drama", and he at first became interested in the ishment of a National Theatre — which interest was manifest in his collab- n with William Archer in a volume, "Schemes and Estimates for a National re." So thoroughly was he identified with the idea that when, in America, roject for a National Theatre was put into practical execution, Barker was from England to consider the advisability of assuming the directorship. His were so fixed regarding what the experiment should be, his experience at the Theatre had so well determined him in his own mind that the realistic drama n intimate drama, that he declined to come to America at that time, because y vastness of the building, and the limitations put upon him by a fashionable d of Directors.

e did come to America, however, in 1915, having by this time established a onal reputation in England for certain innovations in his managerial prepa- s of Shakespeare — innovations directly influenced by the new stagecraft, prophet was Gordon Craig, and whose most eminent disciples were Reinhardt anislovsky. His defiance of tradition in the mounting of Shakespeare brought nness to the text which exhibited the fluent imaginative quality of Mr. Barker's — a fluency not fostered in the plays by which he is known as a playwright. a his rôle as a director of Greek drama — even though Mr. Barker was handi- d by the incongruous adjustments of college stadia to the proportions of Greek ly, he vivified the Attic drama, and, through his untiring energy and quick of decorative possibilities, his ventures in Sophoclean and Euripidean dramas emorable in the history of the American theatre.

r. Barker is, however, essentially a man interested in the literary aspect of ama rather than in theatrical management. At the outbreak of the War he eached that point where, having proven to himself certain characteristics the physical side of the theatre, and having convinced his critics that he was the side of innovation, rather than of tradition, Barker was about to return play writing. Whether or not his recent one-act plays were written since st, 1914, matters little in the evolution of Barker. The great conflict has had eet upon him. It has made him look deeper into phases of human life, and has a touch of compassion to his satire. This change was evident in a short reflective of his impressions of America, called "Souls on Fifth."

an article, written by Barker, on "A Theatre of New Phases", he discusses equirements of the normal theatre, and emphasizes those handicaps which prevented such a theatre from coming into existence. Whatever he has said theatrical conditions has been listened to with earnestness. He has done to keep the British public stirred up to the importance of the theatre as a institution than any one of the new dramatists, outside of Shaw. When his

"Waste" was censored by the Reader of Plays, the discussion which followed in the Parliamentary Joint Committee for the investigation of the censure.

We have selected "The Madras House", which was first performed at the Charles Frohman Repertory Theatre, the Duke of York's, March 9, 1910, because of its true character portrayal, and because it emphasizes just that quality which places Barker among the intellectuals, rather than among the theatrical wrights. He raises the commonplace to an unusual plane. He almost repeats the repetition of the same psychological states under varied conditions. He is individualistic in his identification of manner with person. Though in "The Madras House" one might accuse him of being episodic, his episodes have direct bearing upon one upon another, and present a unity which is one of the cleverest qualities in the construction of this piece. Max Beerbohm speaks of Barker's lust for originality, and says that, in witnessing this play, one should leave at the end of the "magnificent" third act, for to him, in the fourth act, "the flame burns brightly and dimly."

But though, in "The Madras House", Barker gives us the thesis form, the conclusion being of the debatable quality, and though he appears to remain faithful to his theme, at the end one is a little dissatisfied with the inconclusiveness of the outcome. He takes a group and he leaves them with their middle class souls where he found them. The only thing he does is to twirl the souls on the axis of his art for our observation. Nevertheless, one can realize the possibility of "The Madras House" for an evening of sheer enjoyment of the small real life which he has used with telling effect and interest.

THE MADRAS HOUSE
A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

BY GRANVILLE BARKER

COPYRIGHT, 1911,
BY GRANVILLE BARKER

The "Madras House", by Granville Barker, is published by Little, Brown, & Company, and is fully protected by copyright. It must not be performed either by amateurs or professionals without written permission. For such permission and for the acting version with full stage directions, apply to The Paget Dramatic Agency, 25 West 45th Street, New York.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

"The Madras House" was produced at the Duke of York's Theatre (Mr. Frohman's Repertory Theatre), on the evening of March 9th, 1910.

HENRY HUXTABLE	Mr. E. W. C
KATHERINE HUXTABLE	Miss Florence H
LAURA HUXTABLE	Miss Ada M
MINNIE HUXTABLE	Miss Elizabeth C
CLARA HUXTABLE	Miss Joy C
JULIA HUXTABLE	Miss Victoria A
EMMA HUXTABLE	Miss Sybil Tho
JANE HUXTABLE	Miss Nell
MAJOR HIPPISLY THOMAS	Mr. Charles L
PHILIP MADRAS	Mr. Dennis
JESSICA MADRAS	Miss Fay
CONSTANTINE MADRAS	Mr. Sydney Val
AMELIA MADRAS	Miss May
EUSTACE PERRIN STATE	Mr. Arthur V
MARION YATES	Miss Mary J
MR. BRIGSTOCK	Mr. Lewis C
MRS. BRIGSTOCK	Miss Mary I
MISS CHANCELLOR	Miss Geraldine
MR. WINDLESHAM	Mr. Charles I
MR. BELHAVEN	Mr. Donald Ca
THREE MANNEQUINS	{ Miss Asta Fle Miss Mair Va Miss Mary B
A MAID AT DENMARK HILL	Miss Millie I
A MAID AT PHILLIMORE GARDENS	Miss Evangeline H

THE MADRAS HOUSE

ACT I

HUXTABLES live at Denmark Hill, for MR. HUXTABLE is the surviving partner in the well-known Peckham drapery establishment of Roberts & Huxtable, and the situation, besides being salubrious, is therefore convenient. It is a new house. MR. HUXTABLE bought it half finished, so that the interior might be to his liking; its exterior the builder said one might describe as of a Free Queen Anne Treatment; to which MR. HUXTABLE rejoined, after blinking at the red brick spotted with stone ornament, that After all it was inside they were going to live, you know.

ugh the stained, grained front door, rattling with coloured glass, one reaches the hall, needlessly narrow, needlessly dark, but with its black and white tessellated pavement making for cleanliness. On the left is the stained and grained staircase, with its Brussels carpet and twisted brass stair rods, on the right the drawing-room. The drawing-room can hardly be said to express the personality of MR. HUXTABLE. The foundations of its furnishings are in the taste of MRS. HUXTABLE. For fifteen years or so additions to this family museum have been disputed into their place by the six MISS HUXTABLES: LAURA (aged thirty-nine), MINNIE, CLARA, JULIA, EMMA, JANE (aged twenty-six). The rosewood cabinets, the picture from some Academy of the early Seventies, entitled *In Ye Olden Time* (this was a wedding present, most likely), the gilt clock, which is a Shakespeare, narrow-headed, but with a masterly pair of legs, propped pensively against a dial and enshrined beneath a dome of glass, another wedding present. These were the treasures of MRS. HUXTABLE'S first

drawing-room, her solace in the dull post-honeymoon days. She was the daughter of a city merchant, wholesale as against her husband's retail; but even in the Seventies retail was lifting its head. It was considered, though, that KATHERINE TOMBS conferred some distinction upon young HARRY HUXTABLE by marrying him, and even now, as a portly lady nearing sixty, she figures by the rustle of her dress, the measure of her mellow voice, with its carefully chosen phrases, for the dignity of the household.

The difference between one MISS HUXTABLE and another is, to a casual eye, the difference between one lead pencil and another, as these lie upon one's table, after some weeks' use; a matter of length, of sharpening, of wear. LAURA'S distinction lies in her being the housekeeper; it is a solid power, that of ordering the dinner. She is very silent. While her sisters are silent with strangers, she is silent with her sisters. She doesn't seem to read much, either; one hopes she dreams, if only of wild adventures with a new carpet-sweeper. When there was some family bitterness as to whether the fireplace, in summer, should hold ferns or a Chinese umbrella, it was LAURA'S opinion that an umbrella gathers less dust, which carried the day. MINNIE and CLARA are inclined to religion; not sentimentally; works are a good second with them to faith. They have veered, though, lately, from district visiting to an interest in Missions — missions to Poplar or China (one is almost as far as the other); good works, the results of which they cannot see. Happily, they forbear to ask why this proves the more soul-satisfying sort.

JULIA started life — that is to say, left school — as a genius. The head mistress had had two or three years of such dull girls that really she could not resist this excitement. Watercolour sketches were the medium. So JULIA was dressed in brown velveteen, and sent to an art school, where they wouldn't let her do watercolour drawing at all. And in two years she learnt enough about the trade of an artist not ever to want to do those watercolour drawings again. JULIA is now over thirty, and very unhappy. Three of her watercolours (early masterpieces) hang on the drawing-room wall. They shame her, but her mother won't have them taken down. On a holiday she'll be off now and then for a solitary day's sketching, and as she tears up the vain attempt to put on paper the things she has learnt to see, she sometimes cries. It was JULIA, EMMA and JANE who, some years ago, conspired to present their mother with that intensely conspicuous cosy corner. A cosy corner is apparently a device for making a corner just what the very nature of a corner should forbid it to be. They begged themselves; but one wishes that MR. HUXTABLE were more lavish with his dress allowances, then they might at least have afforded something not quite so hideous.

EMMA, having JULIA in mind, has run rather to coats and skirts and common sense. She would have been a success in an office, and worth, perhaps, thirty shillings a week. But the HUXTABLES don't want another thirty shillings a week, and this gift, such as it is, has been wasted, so that EMMA runs also to a brusque temper.

JANE is meekly enough a little wild. MRS. HUXTABLE'S power of applying the brake of good breeding, strong enough over five daughters, waned at the sixth attempt in twelve years, and JANE has actually got herself proposed to twice by not quite desirable young men. Now the fact that she was old enough to be proposed to at all came as something of a shock to the family. Birthdays pass, their celebration growing less emphatic. No one likes to believe that the years are

passing; even the birthday's least able to escape its significance, and then changes the scene. So the MISS HUXTABLES openly asked each other whether marriage of the youngest might imply; perhaps they even asked themselves. But JANE didn't marry. But does, unless, perhaps, she away to do it, there will be searchings, at least. MR. HUXTABLE asked, though, and, MRS. HUXTABLE'S answer — given early morning, before the hot water — scarcely satisfied him. "said MR. HUXTABLE, "if they don't marry some day, what are they to do! It's not as if they to go into the shop." "No, Heaven!" said MRS. HUXTABLE.

Since his illness MR. HUXTABLE taken to asking questions — of everybody and about anything; of himself oftenest of all. But for his illness he would have been a conventional enough type of such a shopkeeper, coarsely fed, with a podgy. But eighteen months' illness and dieting and removal from the world seem to have brought gentleness to his voice, a special humour to his eye, a childishness in his little bursts of temper — have added, in fact, a wistfulness which makes him rather a little old buffer on the whole.

This is a Sunday morning, a bright day in October. The family are at church, and the drawing-room empty. The door opens, and a parlour-maid — much become aproned — shews in PHILIP MADRAS and his friend, MAJOR HENRY THOMAS. THOMAS, long legs, deliberate, moves across the room to the big French windows, which open onto a balcony and look down on the garden and to many gardens beyond. THOMAS is a good fellow.

PHILIP MADRAS is more complex than that. To begin with, it is obvious he is not wholly English. A certain likeness of figure, the keenness of colour of his voice, and a liking for metaphysical turns of speech, an Eastern origin, perhaps. He is kind in manner, but rather incapable of that least English disposition — intellectual positiveness. He is about thirty-five, a year

younger than his friend. The parlour-maid has secured MAJOR THOMAS's hat, and stands clutching it. As PHILIP passes her into the room he asks . . .

PHILIP. About how long?

THE MAID. In just a few minutes I should say, sir. Oh, I beg on, does it appen to be the third day in the month?

PHILIP. I don't know. Tommy, it?

THOMAS [from the window]. Don't me. Well, I suppose I can tell

[And he vaguely fishes for his diary] THE MAID. No, I don't think it does. Because then some of them stop the Oly Communion, and that may them late for dinner, but I don't it is, sir.

[She backs through the door, entangling the hat in the handle]

PHILIP. Is my mother still staying

THE MAID. Mrs. Madras, sir? Yes,

[Then having disentangled the hat, the parlour-maid vanishes. PHILIP thereupon plunges swiftly into what must be an interrupted argument]

PHILIP. Well, my dear Tommy, are the two most important s in a man's character? His side towards money and his attitude towards women.

THOMAS [ponderously slowing him up]. You're full up with moral precepts. Behave about money as if it didn't? I never said don't join the City Council.

PHILIP [deliberately, but in a breath]. Quite impossible for any decent to walk with his eyes open from rloo to Denmark Hill on a Sun-morning without wishing me to for the County Council.

[THOMAS entrenches himself on a sofa]

THOMAS. You've got what I call Reformer's mind. I shouldn't cule it, Phil. It makes a man uny and discontented, not with self, but with other people, mark . . . so it makes him conceited, puts him out of condition both . . . Don't you get to imagine you make this country better by tidying

PHILIP [whimsically]. But I'm very interested in England, Tommy.

THOMAS [not without some answering humour]. We all are. But we don't all need to go about saying so. Even I can be interested in England, I suppose, though I have had to chuck the Army and take to business to earn bread and treacle for a wife and four children . . . and not a bad thing for me, either. I tell you if every chap would look after himself and his family, and lead a godly, righteous and sober life—I'm sorry, but it is Sunday—England would get on a damn sight better than it will with all your interference.

[He leans back. PHILIP's eyes fix themselves on some great distance]

PHILIP. It's a muddled country. One's first instinct is to be rhetorical about it . . . to write poetry and relieve one's feelings. I once thought I might be self-sacrificing—give my goods to the poor, and go slumming—keeping my immortal soul superior still. There's something wrong with a world, Tommy, in which it takes a man like me all his time to find out that it's bread people want, and not either cake or crumbs.

THOMAS. There's something wrong with a man while he will think of other people as if they were ants on an ant heap.

PHILIP [relaxing to a smile]. Tommy, that's perfectly true. I like having a good talk with you: sooner or later you always say one sensible thing.

THOMAS. Thank you; you're damn polite. And, as usual, we've got right off the point.

PHILIP. The art of conversation!

THOMAS [shying at the easy epigram]. Go on six County Councils, if you like. But why chuck up seven hundred a year and a directorship, if State wants you to keep 'em? And you could have double or more, and manage the place, if you'd ask for it.

PHILIP [almost venomously]. Tommy, I loathe the Madras House. State may buy it, and do what he likes with it.

[JULIA and LAURA arrive. They are the first from Church. Sunday frocks, Sunday hats, best gloves, umbrellas and prayer books]

JULIA. Oh, what a surprise!

PHILIP. Yes, we walked down. Ah, you don't know . . . Let me introduce Major Hippisly Thomas . . . my cousin, Miss Julia Huxtable . . . and Miss Huxtable.

JULIA. How do you do?

THOMAS. How do you do?

LAURA. How do you do?

JULIA. Have you come to see Aunt Amy?

PHILIP. No, your father.

JULIA. He's walking back with her. They'll be last, I'm afraid.

LAURA. Will you stay to dinner?

PHILIP. No, I think not.

LAURA. I'd better tell them you won't. Perhaps they'll be laying for you.

[*LAURA goes out, decorously avoiding a collision with EMMA, who, panoplied as the others, comes in at the same moment*]

PHILIP. Hullo, Emma!

EMMA. Well, what a surprise!

PHILIP. You don't know . . . Major Hippisly Thomas . . . Miss Emma Huxtable.

THOMAS. How do you do?

EMMA. How do you do? Will you stay to dinner?

PHILIP. No, we can't. [*That formula again completed, he varies his explanation*] I've just brought Thomas a Sunday morning walk to help me tell Uncle Henry a bit of news. My father will be back in England to-morrow.

EMMA [*with a round mouth*]. Oh!

JULIA. It's a beautiful morning for a walk, isn't it?

THOMAS. Wonderful for October.

[*These two look first at each other, and then out of the window.*]

EMMA gazes quizzically at PHILIP]

EMMA. I think he knows.

PHILIP. He sort of knows.

EMMA. Why are you being odd, Philip?

[*PHILIP is more hail-fellow-well-met with EMMA than with the others*]

PHILIP. Emma . . . I have enticed a comparative stranger to be present so that your father and mother cannot, in decency, begin to fight the family battle over again with me. I know it's very cunning, but we did want a walk. Besides, there's a meeting to-morrow. . . .

[*JANE peeps through the door*]

JANE. You? Mother!

[*She has turned to the hall from the hall comes HUXTABLE's rotund voice.*]
Jane!"

JANE. Cousin Philip!

[*MRS. HUXTABLE sails in superbly compresses every greeting into one*]

MRS. HUXTABLE. What a surprise! Will you stay to dinner?

EMMA [*alive to a certain redundancy*]. No, Mother, they can't.

PHILIP. May I introduce my . . . Major Hippisly Thomas . . . aunt, Mrs. Huxtable.

MRS. HUXTABLE [*stately and gracefully*]. How do you do, Major Thomas?

PHILIP. Thomas is Mr. E. State's London manager.

THOMAS. How do you do?

[*MRS. HUXTABLE takes a chair with the air of one sitting a throne, and from a vantage point begins polite conversation. Her daughter and HIPPISLY THOMAS*]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Not in the then, Major Thomas?

THOMAS. I was in the Army.

EMMA. Jessica quite well, Philip.

PHILIP. Yes, thanks.

EMMA. And Mildred?

PHILIP. I think so. She's back at school.

MRS. HUXTABLE. A wonderful warm autumn, is it not?

THOMAS. Quite.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Do you like Denmark Hill well?

THOMAS. Not well.

MRS. HUXTABLE. We have lived here. I consider it healthy. But London is a healthy place, I think. Oh, I beg your pardon, my daughter Jane.

JANE. How do you do?

[*They shake hands with ceremony. EMMA, in a mind to do things up, goes to the window.*]

EMMA. We've quite a good garden, that's one thing.

THOMAS [*not wholly innocent attempt to escape from his hostess, for the window, too*]. I noticed a man keen on gardens.

MRS. HUXTABLE [*her attention attracted by JULIA's making for the door*]. Julia, where are you going?

JULIA. To take my things to Mother.

[JULIA departs. When they were quite little girls MRS. HUXTABLE always did ask her daughters where they were going when they left the room, and where they had been when they entered it, and she has never dropped the habit. They resent it only by the extreme patience of their replies]

MA [entertainingly]. That's the Crystal Palace.

MRS. H. Is it?

[They both peer appreciatively at that famous landmark. In the Crystal Palace and the sunset the inhabitants of Denmark Hill have acquired almost proprietary interest. Then MRS. HUXTABLE speaks to her nephew with a sudden severity]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Philip, I don't care for your mother's health is at all improving.

PHILIP [amicably]. It never is, Aunt

MRS. HUXTABLE [admitting the justice of the retort]. That's true.

PHILIP. Uncle Henry keeps better, thank you.

MRS. HUXTABLE. He's well enough now. I have had a slight cold. Is it possible that your father may appear in London again?

PHILIP. Yes, he has only been on the Continent. He arrives to-morrow.

MRS. HUXTABLE. I'm sorry.

PHILIP. Mother!

[MRS. HUXTABLE has launched this with such redoubled severity that JANE had to protest. However, at this moment arrives MR. HUXTABLE himself, one glad smile]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Ah, Phil . . . I have an idea you might come over. Stay to dinner. Jane, tell your mother . . . she's taking her bonnet off.

[JANE obeys. He sights on the balcony MAJOR THOMAS'S back]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Who's that out-

PHILIP. Hippisly Thomas. We can't go for a walk; we can't stay.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Oh!

MRS. HUXTABLE. Have you come to business?

PHILIP. Well . . .

MRS. HUXTABLE. On Sunday?

PHILIP. Not exactly.

[She shakes her head, gravely

deprecating. THOMAS comes from the balcony]

MR. HUXTABLE. How are you?

THOMAS. How are you?

MR. HUXTABLE. Fine morning, isn't it? Nice prospect, this . . . see the Crystal Palace?

[While THOMAS turns, with perfect politeness, to view again this phenomenon, PHILIP pacifies his aunt]

PHILIP. You see, Aunt Katherine, to-morrow afternoon we have the first real conference with this Mr. State about buying up the two firms, and my father is passing through England again to attend it.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Of course, Philip, if it's business, I know nothing about it. But is it suggested that your uncle should attend, too?

[Her voice has found a new gravity.

PHILIP becomes very airy; so does MR. HUXTABLE, who comes back to rejoin the conversation]

PHILIP. My dear aunt, naturally.

MR. HUXTABLE. What's this?

MRS. HUXTABLE [the one word expressing volumes]. Constantine.

MR. HUXTABLE [with elaborate innocence]. That's definite now, is it?

MRS. HUXTABLE. You dropped a hint last night, Henry.

MR. HUXTABLE. I dessay. I dessay I did. [His eye shifts guiltily]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Quite out of the question, it seems to me.

[JANE comes back]

JANE. Aunt Mary's coming.

MR. HUXTABLE [genial again]. Oh! My daughter Jane . . . Major Thomas, Major Hippisly Thomas.

JANE [with discretion]. Yes, Father.

MRS. HUXTABLE [tactfully]. You are naturally not aware, Major Thomas, that for family reasons, into which we need not go, Mr. Huxtable has not spoken to his brother-in-law for a number of years.

[PHILIP'S eye meets THOMAS'S in comic agony. But MR. HUXTABLE, too, plunges delightedly into the forbidden subject]

MR. HUXTABLE. Thirty years, very near. Wonderful, isn't it? Interested in the same business. Wasn't easy to keep it up.

THOMAS. I had heard.

MR. HUXTABLE. Oh, yes, notorious.

MRS. HUXTABLE [in reprobation]. And well it may be, Henry.

[MRS. MADRAS comes in. It is evident that PHILIP is his father's son. He would seem so wholly but for that touch of "self worship which is often self mistrust"; his mother's gift, appearing nowadays less loveably in her as a sort of querulous assertion of her rights and wrongs against the troubles which have been too strong for her. She is a pale old lady, shrunk a little, the life gone out of her]

MRS. HUXTABLE [some severity remaining]. Amy, your husband is in England again.

[PHILIP presents a filial cheek. It is kissed]

PHILIP. How are you, Mother?

MR. HUXTABLE [sotto voce]. Oh, tact, Katherine, tact!

PHILIP. Perhaps you remember Reggie Thomas?

THOMAS. I was at Marlborough with Philip, Mrs. Madras.

MRS. MADRAS. Yes. Is he, Katherine?

[Having given THOMAS a limp hand, and her sister this coldest of responses, she finds her way to a sofa, where she sits silent, thinking to herself. MRS. HUXTABLE keeps majestic hold upon her subject]

MRS. HUXTABLE. I am utterly unable to see, Philip, why your uncle should break through his rule now.

MR. HUXTABLE. There you are, Phil!

PHILIP. Of course it is quite for Uncle Henry to decide.

MR. HUXTABLE. Naturally . . . naturally.

[Still he has an appealing eye on PHILIP, who obliges him]

PHILIP. But since Mr. State's offer may not be only for the Madras House, but Roberts and Huxtable into the bargain . . . if the two principal proprietors can't meet him round a table to settle the matter . . .

THOMAS [ponderously diplomatic]. Yes . . . a little awkward . . . if I may say so . . . as Mr. State's representative, Mrs. Huxtable.

MRS. HUXTABLE. You don't think, do you, Major Thomas, that any amount of awkwardness should induce us to pass over wicked conduct?

[This reduces the assembly to such a shamed silence that

poor MR. HUXTABLE could add —]

MR. HUXTABLE. Oh, talk of something else . . . talk of something

[After a moment MRS. MADRAS's pale voice steals in, as she speaks to her son]

MRS. MADRAS. When did you come from your father?

PHILIP. A letter from Major Thomas two or three days ago, and a telegram yesterday morning.

[MRS. HUXTABLE, with a certain authority, now restores the conversation to its old and easy tone to the conversation]

MRS. HUXTABLE. And have you been to the Army long, Major Thomas?

THOMAS. Four years.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Now what do you take to the Drapery Trade?

PHILIP [very explanatory]. Major Thomas is an American financier, Aunt Clara, who has bought up Burrow's, the best mantle place in the city, and is now to buy us up, too, perhaps.

MRS. HUXTABLE. We are not without difficulties, I hope.

PHILIP. Oh, no.

MRS. HUXTABLE. No. No. No. Henry would have told me if there had been.

[As she thus gracefully dismisses the subject there appear up the stairs and along the balcony the first arrivals from Church, MINNIE, CLARA. The male part of the party unsettles itself]

MR. HUXTABLE. Ullo! What have you been?

MINNIE. We went for a walk.

MRS. HUXTABLE [in apparent surprise]. A walk, Minnie! What?

MINNIE. Just the long way round. We thought we'd have time.

CLARA. Did you notice the vicar's short sermon?

MR. HUXTABLE. Oh, may I say to my daughter Clara . . . Major Thomas. My daughter Minnie. Major Thomas.

[The conventional chant begins]

MINNIE. How d'you do?

THOMAS. How d'you do?

CLARA. How d'you do?

MINNIE. How d'you do, Philip?

PHILIP. How d'you do?

CLARA. How d'you do?

PHILIP. How d'you do?

[The chant over, the company resettles; MR. HUXTABLE button-holing PHILIP in the process with an air of some mystery]

HUXTABLE. By the way, Phil, I'd like to ask you something before . . . rather important.

PHILIP. I shall be at your place in the morning. Thomas is coming to go through some figures.

HUXTABLE [with a regular snap]. I sha'n't.

PHILIP. The State meeting is in the Street, three o'clock.

HUXTABLE. I know, I know. [Finding himself prominent, he resumes the conversation] I'm slacking off. Major Thomas, slacking off. Ever since I was ill I've been slacking off.

MRS. HUXTABLE. You are perfectly well now, Henry.

HUXTABLE. Not the point. I want leisure, you know, leisure. Time to think a bit.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Nonsense! [She speaks with correctness] Major Thomas excuse me.

PHILIP HUXTABLE [on his hobby]. Oh, Henry, a man must . . . some portion of his life . . .

MRS. HUXTABLE. Quite. I got most of my work done early.

MRS. HUXTABLE. The natural time

HUXTABLE. Ah, lucky feller! I suppose. Well, I wasn't. I've been getting the books for years and new editions. I'd like you to see my library. But these geniuses want to go down to . . . if a man's to pace with the thought of the day, you know. Macaulay, Herbert Spencer, Grote's History of Greece! I don't get them all there.

[He finds no further response.

MRS. HUXTABLE fills the gap]

MRS. HUXTABLE. I thought the sermon this morning, Amy, didn't you?

MRS. MADRAS [unexpectedly]. No, I

MINNIE [to do her share of the entertainment]. Mother, somebody ought to say something about those boys . . . it's disconcerting. Mr. Vivian had actually to be found from the organ at them at the last hymn.

[Her things taken off, re-appears. MRS. HUXTABLE is on the spot]

HUXTABLE. Ah, my daughter . . . Major —

JULIA. We've been introduced, Father.

[She says this with a hauteur which really is pure nervousness, but MR. HUXTABLE is sufficiently crushed]

MR. HUXTABLE. Oh, I beg pardon.

[But MRS. HUXTABLE disapproves of any self-assertion, and descends upon the culprit; who is, for some obscure reason (or for none), more often disappointed than the others]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Close the door, please, Julia.

JULIA. I'm sorry, Mother.

[PHILIP closes the offending door. JULIA obliterates herself in a chair, and the conversation, hardly encouraged by this little affray, comes to an intolerable standstill. At last CLARA makes an effort]

CLARA. Is Jessica quite well, Philip?

PHILIP. Yes, thank you, Clara.

MRS. HUXTABLE. And dear little Mildred?

PHILIP. Yes, thank you, Aunt Kate.

[Further standstill. Then MINNIE contrives a remark]

MINNIE. Do you still like that school for her?

PHILIP [with finesse]. It seems to provide every accomplishment that money can buy.

[MRS. HUXTABLE discovers a sure opening]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Have you been away for the summer, Major Thomas?

THOMAS [vaguely — he is getting sympathetically tongue-tied]. Oh . . . yes . . .

PHILIP. Tommy and Jessica and I took our holidays motoring around Munich and into it for the operas.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Was that pleasant?

PHILIP. Very.

MRS. HUXTABLE. And where was dear Mildred?

PHILIP. With her aunt most of the time . . . Jessica's sister-in-law, you know.

MINNIE. Lady Ames?

PHILIP. Yes.

MRS. HUXTABLE [innocently, genuinely snobbish]. Very nice for her.

MR. HUXTABLE. We take a house at Weymouth, as a rule.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Do you know Weymouth, Major Thomas?

THOMAS. No, I don't.

MRS. HUXTABLE. George III. used to stay there, but that is a hotel now.

MR. HUXTABLE. Keep your spare money in the country, y' know.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Oh, there is everything one wants at Weymouth.

[But even this subject flags]

MRS. HUXTABLE. You think more of Bognor, Amy, I know.

MRS. MADRAS. Only to live in, Katherine.

[They have made their last effort. The conversation is dead. Mr.

HUXTABLE'S discomfort suddenly becomes physical]

MR. HUXTABLE. I'm going to change my coat.

PHILIP. I think perhaps we ought to be off.

MR. HUXTABLE. No, no, no, no, no! I sha'n't be a minute. Don't go, Phil; there's a good fellow.

[And he has left them all to it. The HUXTABLE conversation, it will be noticed, consists mainly of asking questions. Visitors, after a time, fall into the habit, too]

PHILIP. Do you like this house better than the old one, Clara?

CLARA. It has more rooms, you know.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Do you live in London, Major Thomas?

THOMAS. No, I live at Woking. I come up and down every day. I think the country's better for the children.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Not a cheerful place, is it?

THOMAS. Oh, vory cheerful.

MRS. HUXTABLE. I had thought not, for some reason.

EMMA. The cemetery, Mother.

MRS. HUXTABLE *[accepting the suggestion with dignity]*. Perhaps.

CLARA. And of course there's a much larger garden. We have the garden of the next house as well.

JANE. Not all the garden of the next house.

CLARA. Well, most of it.

[This stimulating difference of opinion takes them to the balcony. PHILIP follows. JULIA follows PHILIP. MINNIE departs to take her things off]

JULIA. Do you notice how near the Crystal Palace seems? That means rain.

PHILIP. Of course . . . you the Crystal Palace.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Julia, think you won't catch cold balcony without a hat?

JULIA *[meek, but, before the determined]*. I don't think so,

[MRS. HUXTABLE turns added politeness, to THOMAS]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Yes, we live not so far along the hill; tainly was a smaller house.

[PHILIP is now on the receiving more information]

PHILIP. That's Ruskin's house. Yes, I see the chimney pots.

MRS. HUXTABLE. I should moved, myself, but I was over

EMMA. Mother, we had gro of Hollybank.

MRS. HUXTABLE. I was ov Things are done on a larger se they used to be. Not that I of that.

THOMAS. Of course one's far grow up.

MRS. HUXTABLE. People spe money now-a-days. I remem father's practice was to live his income. However, he l greater part of his money by investments in lead, I think I was at school at the time, in E And he educated me above my in life.

[At this moment CLARA b of the conservatory. S has happened]

CLARA. Jane, the Agapanth at last!

JANE. Oh!

[They crowd in to see it. crowds in, too. MRS. TABLE is unmoved]

MRS. HUXTABLE. We are t riches are a snare, Major Thon

THOMAS. It is one I have found easy to avoid, Mrs. Hux

MRS. HUXTABLE *[oblivious of which, indeed, she would not pected on such a subject]*. And noticed that their acquisition improves the character of p my station of life. I am, of ignorant of my husband's affa that is to say, I keep myself as as possible . . . but it is my w the ordering of our household remain as it was when we w married.

MAS [forestalling a yawn]. Quite
nite so.

[MRS. HUXTABLE takes a breath]

HUXTABLE. A family of daugh-
major Thomas . . .

A [a little agonised]. Mother!

HUXTABLE. What is it, Emma?
[But EMMA thinks better of it, and
goes to join the Agapanthus
party, saying —]

A. Nothing, Mother. I beg
ardon.

[MRS. HUXTABLE retakes her
breath]

HUXTABLE. What were we

MAS [with resigned politeness]. A
of daughters.

HUXTABLE. Yes. Were you
war?

[The inexplicable but characteristic
suddenness of this rouses the
MAJOR a little]

MAS. I was.

HUXTABLE. I find that people
fferently on family life to what
sed. A man no longer seems
ed to marry and support a wife
mily by his unaided exertions.
der that a pity.

MAS [near another yawn]. Quite
nite so.

HUXTABLE. I have always de-
ed that my daughters should be
after for themselves alone.
should ensure their happiness.
gible gentleman who visits here
tly is always given to under-
delicately, that nothing need
ected from Mr. Huxtable beyond
approval. You are married, I
you said, Major Thomas.

[This quite wakes him up, though
MRS. HUXTABLE is really inno-
cent of her implication]

MAS. Yes. Oh, dear me, yes.

HUXTABLE. And a family?

MAS. Four children . . . the
st is only three.

HUXTABLE. Pretty dear!

MAS. No; ugly little beggar,
s character.

HUXTABLE. I must take off my
before dinner. You'll excuse me.
is not punctual one-self . . .

MAS. Quite.

HUXTABLE. We cannot induce
join us?

MAS. Many thanks, but we
to meet. Mrs. Phil for lunch in
two.

MRS. HUXTABLE. I am sorry.

[THOMAS opens the door for her
with his best bow, and she
graciously departs, conscious
of having properly impressed
him. CLARA, who has now
her things to take off, crosses
the room, saying to PHILIP,
who follows her from the bal-
cony —]

CLARA. Yes, I'll tell, father, Philip,
I'm going upstairs.

[THOMAS opens the door for her,
but only with his second best
bow, and then turns to PHILIP
with a sigh]

THOMAS. Phil, we ought to be going.

PHILIP. Wait till you've seen my
uncle again.

THOMAS. All right.

[He heaves another sigh and sits
down. All this time there has
been MRS. MADRAS upon her
sofa, silent, as forgotten as any
other piece of furniture for which
there is no immediate use.
PHILIP now goes to her. When
she does speak it is unrespon-
sively]

PHILIP. How long do you stay in
town, Mother?

MRS. MADRAS. I have been here a
fortnight. I generally stay three weeks.

PHILIP. Jessica has been meaning
to ask you to Phillimore Gardens again.

MRS. MADRAS. Has she?

PHILIP [a little guiltily]. Her time's
very much occupied . . . with one
thing and another.

[Suddenly MRS. MADRAS rouses
herself]

MRS. MADRAS. I wish to see your
father, Philip.

PHILIP [in doubt]. He won't be here
long, Mother.

MRS. MADRAS. No, I am sure he
won't.

[With three delicate strides THOMAS
lands himself onto the balcony]

PHILIP. Tommy being tactful!
Well, I'll say that you want to see
him.

MRS. MADRAS. No, please don't.
Tell him that I think he ought to come
and see me.

PHILIP. He won't come, Mother.

MRS. MADRAS. No, I know he
won't. He came to England in May,
didn't he? He was here till July,
wasn't he? Did he so much as send
me a message?

PHILIP [*with unkind patience*]. No, Mother.

MRS. MADRAS. What was he doing all the while, Philip?

PHILIP. I didn't see much of him. I really don't know what he came back for at all. We could have done this business without him, and anyway it hasn't materialised till now. This is why he's passing through England again. I don't think there's much to be gained by your seeing him, you know.

MRS. MADRAS. You are a little heartless, Philip.

[*This being a little true, PHILIP a little resents it*]

PHILIP. My dear mother, you and he have been separated for . . . how long is it?

MRS. MADRAS [*with withered force*]. I am his wife still, I should hope. He went away from me when he was young. But I have never forgotten my duty. And now that he is an old man, and past such sin, and I am an old woman, I am still ready to be a comfort to his declining years, and it's right that I should be allowed to tell him so. And you should not let your wife put you against your own mother, Philip.

PHILIP [*bewildered*]. Really!

MRS. MADRAS. I know what Jessica thinks of me. Jessica is very clever, and has no patience with people who can only do their best to be good . . . I understand that. Well, it isn't her duty to love me . . . at least it may not be her duty to love her husband's mother, or it may be, I don't say. But it is your duty. I sometimes think, Philip, you don't love me any longer, though you're afraid to say so.

[*The appeal ends so pathetically that PHILIP is very gently equivocal*]

PHILIP. If I didn't love you, my dear mother, I should be afraid to say so.

MRS. MADRAS. When are you to see your father?

PHILIP. We've asked him to dinner to-morrow night.

[*At this moment EMMA comes in with a briskness so jarring to MRS. MADRAS'S already wrought nerves, that she turns on her*]

MRS. MADRAS. Emma, why do you come bouncing in like that when I'm

trying to get a private word with Philip?

EMMA. Really, Aunt Amy, the sitting-room belongs to everyone.

MRS. MADRAS. I'm sure you know why I come and stay here. I dislike your mother intensely.

EMMA. Then kindly don't say so. I've no wish not to be friendly to you.

PHILIP [*pacifically*]. Emma, Uncle Henry ought to attend the meeting to-morrow.

MRS. MADRAS [*beginning to cough*]. Of course he ought. Who is he, though? I like this about Constantine! Mr. Kerchief's upstairs.

EMMA [*contritely*]. Shall I say anything for you, Aunt Amy?

MRS. MADRAS. No. I'll be a nuisance to no one.

[*She retires, injured. PHILIP continues, purposely placid*]

PHILIP. What's more, he doesn't want to attend it.

EMMA. I'm sorry I was rude, but she does get on our nerves. I know.

PHILIP. Why do you invite her?

EMMA [*quite jolly with him*]. We're all very fond of Aunt Amy. Anyhow, mother would think it my duty. I don't see how she can come, though. She never goes anywhere . . . never joins in the conversation . . . just sits nursing her nerves.

PHILIP [*quizzically*]. You're fond of her, Emma.

EMMA. Yes. I heard you were so much fun of Julia in the conservatory. If one stopped doing one's duty, the world would go upside down. [*Her voice now takes that tone of the well-bred substitute for a vulgar one*] . . . I suppose I oughtn't to say about Julia, but it is rather true. You know, Julia gets hysterical sometimes, when she has her headaches.

PHILIP. Does she?

EMMA. Well, a collar-maker called Waller came back from the States with a mistake for one of father's shirts. I think he lives near here, but I don't know. One of these big steam laundries in Morgan the cook got it, and sent it to Julia . . . and Julia kept it. And when mother found out she was so for a whole day. She said it showed a wanton mind.

[*PHILIP'S mocking face grows grave*]

PHILIP. I don't think that's at all
big, Emma.

EMMA [*in genuine surprise*]. Don't

PHILIP. How old is Julia?

EMMA. She's thirty-four. [*Her face
pale*] No . . . it is rather dread-
ful, isn't it? [*Then wrinkling her fore-
head at a puzzle*]. It isn't exactly
what he wants to get married. I dare-
say mother is right about that.

PHILIP. About what?

EMMA. Well, some time ago a gentle-
man proposed to Jane. And mother
would have been more honourable
and spoken to father first, and that
was the youngest, and too young
for her own mind. Well, you
see she's twenty-six. And then they
thought of something he'd once done, and
put a stop to. And Jane was
rebellious, and mother cried. . . .

PHILIP. Does she always cry?

EMMA. Yes, she does cry, if she's
about us. And I think she was
right. One ought not to risk being
happy for life, ought one?

PHILIP. Are you all happy now,

EMMA. Oh, deep down, I think we
should be so ungrateful not to
when one has a good home
! But of course living to-
gether and going away together, and
together all the time, one does
little irritable now and then. I
think that's why we sit as mum as
rats when people are here; we're
of squabbling.

PHILIP. Do you squabble?

EMMA. Not like we used. You
see till we moved into this house,
and only two bedrooms between
the nursery and the old night
room. Now Laura and Minnie have
each, and there's one we take by
ourselves. There wasn't a bigger house
we got here, or I suppose we could
have had it. They hated the idea of
going far. And it's rather odd, you
see, father seems afraid of spending
money, though he must have got lots.
I say if he gave us any more we
shouldn't know what to do with it,
and of course that's true.

PHILIP. But what occupations have
you?

EMMA. We're always busy. I mean
lots to be done about the house,
there's calling and classes and
Julia used to sketch quite

well. You mustn't think I'm grum-
bling, Philip. I know I talk too much.
They tell me so.

[*PHILIP's comment is the question,
half serious*]

PHILIP. Why don't you go away,
all six of you, or say five of you?

EMMA [*wide-eyed*]. Go away!

PHILIP [*comprehensively*]. Out of it.

EMMA [*wider-eyed*]. Where to?

PHILIP [*with a sigh — for her*] Ah,
that's just it.

EMMA. How could one! And it
would upset them dreadfully. Father
and mother don't know that one feels
like this at times . . . they'd be very
grieved.

[*PHILIP turns to her with kindly
irony*]

PHILIP. Emma, people have been
worrying your father at the shop lately
about the drawbacks of the living in
the system. Why don't you ask him to
look at home for them?

[*MR. HUXTABLE returns, at ease in a
jacket. He pats his daughter kindly
on the shoulder*]

MR. HUXTABLE. Now run along,
Jane . . . I mean Emma . . . I want
a word with your cousin.

EMMA. Yes, Father.

[*EMMA — or JANE — obediently
disappears. PHILIP then looks
sideways at his uncle*]

PHILIP. I've come over, as you
asked me to.

MR. HUXTABLE. I didn't ask you.

PHILIP. You dropped a hint.

MR. HUXTABLE [*almost with a blush*].
Did I? I dessay I did.

PHILIP. But you must hurry up
and decide about the meeting to-
morrow. Thomas and I have got to
go.

MR. HUXTABLE. Phil, I suppose
you're set on selling.

PHILIP. Quite.

MR. HUXTABLE. You young men!
The Madras Ouse means nothing to
you.

PHILIP [*anti-sentimental*]. Nothing
unsaleable, Uncle.

MR. HUXTABLE. Well, well, well!
[*Then, in a furtive fuss*] Well, just a
minute, my boy, before your aunt
comes down . . . she's been going on
at me upstairs, y' know! Something
you must do for me to-morrow, like a
good feller, at the shop in the morning.

[*He suddenly becomes portentous*] Have you heard this yet about Miss Yates?

PHILIP. No.

MR. HUXTABLE. Disgraceful! Disgraceful!

PHILIP. She got on very well in Bond Street . . . learnt a good deal. She has only been back a few weeks.

MR. HUXTABLE [*snorting derisively*]. Learnt a good deal! [*Then he sighs THOMAS on the balcony, and hails him*] Oh, come in, Major Thomas. [*And dropping his voice again ominously*] Shut the window, if you don't mind; we don't want the ladies to hear this.

[*THOMAS shuts the window, and*

MR. HUXTABLE *spreads himself to the awful enjoyment of imparting scandal*]

MR. HUXTABLE. I tell you, my boy, up at your place, got hold of she's been by some feller . . . some West End Club feller, I dessay . . . and he's put her in the . . . well, I tell you!! Major Thomas will excuse me. Not a chit of a girl, mind you, but first hand in our Costume room. Buyer we were going to make her, and all!

[*PHILIP frowns, both at the news and at his uncle's manner of giving it*]

PHILIP. What do you want me to do?

MR. HUXTABLE [*more portentous than ever*]. You wait; that's not the worst of it. You know Brigstock.

PHILIP. Do I?

MR. HUXTABLE. Oh, yes; third man in the Osier.

PHILIP. True.

MR. HUXTABLE. Well . . . it seems that more than a week ago Miss Chancellor had caught them kissing.

PHILIP [*his impatience of the display growing*]. Caught who kissing?

MR. HUXTABLE. I know it ain't clear. Let's go back to the beginning. . . Major Thomas will excuse me.

THOMAS [*showing the properest feeling*]. Not at all.

MR. HUXTABLE. Wednesday afternoon, Willoughby, that's our doctor, comes up as usual. Miss Yates goes in to see him. Miss Chancellor—that's our housekeeper, Major Thomas—over'ears, quite by accident, so she says, and afterwards taxes her with it.

PHILIP. Unwise.

MR. HUXTABLE. No! no! Her plain duty . . . she knows my principle about

such things. But then she rer about the kissing and that get among our young ladies. So stupid there, I grant you, but y what these things are. And gets about about Miss Yates over the shop. And then it t that Brigstock's a married been married two years . . from us, you know, because he in and on promotion and all And yesterday morning his wi up in my office, and has hyster says her husband's been slander

PHILIP. I don't see why Mi should come to any particular our place. A girl's only out sight at week ends, and the supposed to know where she is.

MR. HUXTABLE [*still ins spreading himself, but with tha look creeping on him now*]. W I had er up the day before. I don't know what's coming o I scolded her well. I was in t in all I said . . . but . . . you ever suddenly eard your o saying a thing? Well, I did . it sounded more like a dog than me. And I went funny So I told her to leave the roo grows distressed and appealin you must take it on, Phil ought to be settled to-morro Yates must have the sack, a not sure Brigstock hadn't bet the sack. We don't want to l Chancellor, but really if she ca er tongue at her age . . . we better have . . .

PHILIP [*out of patience*]. C sense, Uncle!

MR. HUXTABLE [*his old unqu self asserted for a moment*]. N not have these scandals in t We've always been free of almost always. I don't wan hard on the girl. If the man employ, and you can find im punish the guilty as well as t cent . . . I'm for all that. [*Th exhausted, he continues, quite pat to THOMAS*] But I do not kno coming over me. Before I go have tackled this business like But when you're a long time in I'd never been ill like that bef I dunno how it is . . . you ge ing . . . and things which use quite clear don't seem nearly . . . and then after, when y

and say the things that used to natural . . . they don't come so as they did, and that puts you something . . .

s interrupted by the re-appearance
MRS. HUXTABLE, lace-capped, and ready for dinner. She is at the pitch to which the upstairs dispute with her husband evidently brought her. It would seem he died in the middle of it]

. HUXTABLE. Is it the fact, that if your uncle does not the meeting to-morrow that this transaction with Mr. — I for- name — the American gentle- . . . and which I, of course, nothing about, will be seriously

HUXTABLE [*joining battle*]. I don't see why I shouldn't go. Constantine chooses to turn up . . . his business. I needn't speak y to him . . . so to say.

. HUXTABLE [*hurling this choice from her vocabulary*]. A quibble,

HUXTABLE. If he's leaving Eng- for good . . .

. HUXTABLE. But you do as ke, of course.

HUXTABLE [*wistful again*]. I so like you to be convinced.

. HUXTABLE. Don't prevaricate, And your sister is just coming the room. We had better drop the t.

in MRS. MADRAS does come, but hat with one thing and another

MR. HUXTABLE is now getting hat he would call thoroughly put t]

. HUXTABLE. Now if Amelia as to propose seeing im —

. HUXTABLE. Henry . . . a consideration!

HUXTABLE [*goaded to the truth*].

I want to go, Kitty, and that's out it. And I dropped a hint, I to Phil to come over and help me h it with you. I thought he'd it seem as if it was most pressing ss . . . only he hasn't . . . so hurt your feelings less. Because en bound to have told you after- , or it might have slipped out ow. Goodness gracious me,

here's the Madras House, which I've sunk enough money in these last ten years to build a battleship, very nearly . . . a small battleship, y' know . . . it's to be sold because Phil won't stand by me, and his father don't care a button now. Not but what that's Constantine all over! Marries you, Amelia, behaves like a duke and an archangel, mixed, for eighteen months, and then —

MRS. HUXTABLE [*scandalised, "Before visitors, too!"*]. Henry!

MR. HUXTABLE. All right, all right. And I'm not to attend this meeting, if you please!

[*The little storm subsides*]

MRS. MADRAS. It's to be sold, is it?

PHILIP. Yes, Mother.

MRS. MADRAS [*at her brother*]. It was started with my money as well as yours.

[MR. HUXTABLE is recovering, and takes no notice]

PHILIP. Yes, Mother, we know.

MRS. MADRAS. And if that's all you've lost by Constantine, I don't see you've a right to be so bitter against him.

[*She is still ignored. Mr. HUXTABLE, quite cheery again, goes on affably*]

MR. HUXTABLE. D'you know, Major Thomas, that twenty years ago, when that shop began to be the talk of London, Duchesses have been known to go, to all intents and purposes, on their knees to him to design them a dress. Wouldn't do it unless he pleased — not unless he approved their figure. Ad Society under his thumb.

MRS. HUXTABLE [*from the height of respectability*]. No doubt he knew his business.

MR. HUXTABLE [*in an ecstasy*]. Knew his business! Knew his business! ! My boy, in the old days . . . asked everywhere, like one of themselves, very nearly! First of his sort to break that barrier. D'you know, it's my belief that if Mrs. Gladstone had been thirty years younger, and a fashionable woman . . . he could have had a knighthood.

MRS. HUXTABLE [*explicitly*]. He was untrue to his wife, Henry.

[*At this Mr. HUXTABLE is the moral man again. These sudden changes are so like him. They are genuine; he is just half conscious of their suddenness*]

MR. HUXTABLE. Yes, I know, and Amy did what she should have done. You see, it wasn't an ordinary case, Major Thomas. It was girls in the shop. And even though he took em out of the shop . . . that's a slur on the whole trade. A man in his position . . . you can't overlook that.

MRS. MADRAS [*palely asserting herself*]. I could have overlooked it if I had chosen.

PHILIP [*to whom this is all so futile and foolish*]. My dear mother, you were unhappy with my father, and you left him . . . the matter is very simple.

MRS. MADRAS. I beg your pardon, Philip . . . I was not unhappy with him.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Amy, how could you be happy with a man who was unfaithful to you? What nonsense!

[JANE and JULIA, from the balcony, finding the window locked, tap with their finger-nails upon the pane. The very sharpness of the sound begins to put out MR. HUXTABLE again]

MR. HUXTABLE. No, no! They can't come in! [*He mouths at them through the window*] You can't come in.

[JANE mouths back]

MR. HUXTABLE. What? [*Then the sense of it coming to him, he looks at his watch*] No, it isn't . . . two minutes yet.

[*And he turns away, having excluded the innocent mind from this unseemly discussion. But at the very moment LAURA comes in by the door. His patience flies*]

MR. HUXTABLE. Oh, damn! Well, I beg pardon. [*Then in desperate politeness*] Let me introduce . . . my daughter Laura . . . Major Thomas.

LAURA [*collectedly*]. We have met, Father.

MR. HUXTABLE [*giving it all up*]. Well . . . how can I tell . . . there are so many of you!

MRS. HUXTABLE [*severely*]. I think, Henry, you had better go to this meeting to-morrow.

MR. HUXTABLE [*wistful for a moment*]. You think I ought?

MRS. HUXTABLE. You know you ought not.

MR. HUXTABLE [*disputing it manfully*]. No . . . I don't know I ought not. It isn't so easy to know what ought and ought not to be done as you always make out, Kitty. And

suppose I just do something for once, and see what happens.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Henry, do such things.

MR. HUXTABLE [*very reason* MAJOR THOMAS]. Well, since I'm ill —

[*But EMMA and MINNIE's in now, and JANE and finding their exile a bit reasonable, rattle hard window. MR. HUXTABLE it all up again*]

MR. HUXTABLE. Oh, let Phil . . . there's a good feller.

THOMAS. Allow me.

[*And he* EMMA [*crisply*]. Oh! what's been about?

MRS. HUXTABLE. Never mind,

[*She says this to EMMA would have said to it the age of four. Me*

MR. HUXTABLE has re

MR. HUXTABLE. You know Thomas, Constantine could always the better of me in little things

[JANE has sighted MINNIE callously, across the br the room, imparts a tray

JANE. Minnie, your frog's de in the conservatory.

[MINNIE

MINNIE. Oh, dear!

MR. HUXTABLE. . . . After ference I began to write to Dear Sir; to this day he'll s business letters beginning Dear

[MINNIE is hurrying to t house of death]

JANE. I buried it.

MR. HUXTABLE. . . . Always ease, you know.

[THOMAS escapes from PHILIP is bending o mother a little kindlier]

PHILIP. I'll try to see yo before you go back to Bognor, M

[*At this moment the gong rings tremendous gong, belove English middle class, makes any house seem A hollow sound; the hour striking its own stomach. JANE, whose are not taken off, gives gated yelp and dashes door, dashes into the re tidy CLARA. MRS. HUXTABLE shakes a finger*]

MRS. HUXTABLE. Late again

PHILIP. We'll be off, Aunt Katherine.
 MRS. HUXTABLE *[with a common
 civility she has not shewn before]*.
 . . . never think I mean to be
 righteous about your father. But
 made your mother most unhappy
 you were too young to know of
 . and there is the example to
 me, isn't there?

PHILIP. Yes . . . of course, Aunt
 I know just how you feel about
 . I'm not fond of him, either.

*[PHILIP must be a little mis-
 chievous with his aunt. She
 responds by returning at once
 to her own apparent self again]*

MRS. HUXTABLE. My dear boy . . .
 your own father!

*[From the balcony one hears the
 tag of JULIA'S entertaining of
 MAJOR THOMAS. They have
 been peering at the horizon]*

JULIA. Yes, it means rain . . . when
 see it so clearly.

*[A general-post of leave-taking
 now begins]*

PHILIP. Well, see you to-morrow,
 Henry.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Yes, I suppose so.
 and about that other matter. . . .

PHILIP. What can I do?

MRS. HUXTABLE. I'll telephone you
 to-morrow morning.

PHILIP. Good-bye, Mother.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Good-bye, Mrs. Huxtable.

MRS. HUXTABLE *[with a final flourish
 of civility]*. You have excused this
 stilted discussion, I hope, Major
 Thomas . . . it will happen sometimes.

MRS. HUXTABLE. I've been most interested.

*[MINNIE comes back sadly from
 the frog's grave]*

PHILIP. Good-bye, Clara.

CLARA. Good-bye, Philip.

MRS. HUXTABLE. You really won't
 go to dinner?

PHILIP. Good-bye, Laura.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Thanks, no. We meet to-
 morrow.

*[The general-post quickens, the
 chorus grows confused]*

CLARA. Good-bye.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Good-bye.

EMMA. Good-bye.

MRS. HUXTABLE. Good-bye.

PHILIP. Good-bye, Emma — oh, par-

*[There has been the confusion of
 crossed hands. Apologies, with-
 drawals, a treading on toes,
 more apologies]*

EMMA. Good-bye, Major Thomas.

PHILIP. Now good-bye, Emma.

THOMAS. Good-bye, Mrs. Madras.

PHILIP. Good-bye.

THOMAS. Good-bye.

*[The chorus and the general-post
 continue, until at last PHILIP
 and THOMAS escape to a tram
 and a tube and their lunch,
 while the HUXTABLES sit down
 in all ceremony to Sunday din-
 ner: Roast beef, horse-radish,
 Yorkshire pudding, brown pota-
 toes, Brussels sprouts, apple
 tart, custard and cream, Stillon
 cheese, dessert]*

ACT II

*The business offices of ROBERTS and
 HUXTABLE are tucked away upon the
 first floor somewhere at the back of
 that large drapery establishment. The
 waiting-room — the one in which
 employee sits in shivering prepara-
 tion for interviews with employer
 — besides thus having been the
 silent scene of more misery than
 most places on earth, is one of the
 very ugliest rooms that ever entered
 into the mind of a builder and
 decorator. Four plain walls of brick
 or plaster, with seats round them,
 would have left it a waiting-room
 pure and simple. But the ugly
 hand of the money maker was upon
 it. In the person of a contractor
 he thrust upon the unfortunate room
 — as on all the others — everything
 that could excuse his price and dis-
 guise his profit. The walls, to start
 with, were distempered an unobjec-
 tionable green, but as that might
 seem too plain and cheap, a dado
 of a nice stone colour was added,
 topped with stencilling in dirty red
 of a pattern that once was Greek.*

*The fireplace is apparently designed to
 provide the maximum amount of
 work possible for the wretched boy
 who cleans it every morning, retir-
 ing from the contest well black-
 leaded himself. The mantelpiece
 above — only an expert in such
 abominations knows what it is
 made of; but it pretends, with the
 aid of worm-shaped dashes of paint,
 to be brown marble. It is too high*

for comfort, too low for dignity. It has to be dusted, and usually isn't.

The square lines of the two long windows, which look upon some sanitary brick airshaft, have been carefully spoilt by the ovalling of their top panes. The half-glazed door, that opens from the passage, is of the wrong shape; the green baize door, that admits to MR. PHILIP'S room, is of the wrong colour.

And then the furnishing! Those yellow chairs upholstered in red cotton goose-flesh plush; that plush-seated, plush-backed bench, placed draughtily between the windows! There is a reasonable office table in the middle of the room. On the walls are, firstly, photographs of ROBERTS and HUXTABLE. ROBERTS was a Welshman, and looks it. No prosperous drapery business in London but has its Welshman. There is also a photograph of the premises — actual; and an advertisement sketch of them — ideal. There is a ten-year-old fashion plate: twenty faultless ladies engaged in ladylike occupations or serene in the lack of any. There is an insurance almanac, the one thing of beauty in the room. On the mantelpiece lies a London Directory, the one piece of true colour.

The hand of the money maker that has wrenched awry the Greek pattern on the wall has been laid also on all the four people who sit waiting for MR. PHILIP at noon on this Monday; and to the warping more or less of them all.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK, sitting stiffly on the plush bench, in brown quilled hat and coat and skirt, is, one would guess, a clerk of some sort. She lacks colour; she lacks repose; she lacks — one stops to consider that she might possibly be a beautiful woman were it not for the things she lacks. But she is the product of fifteen years or so of long hours and little lunch. Certainly at this moment she is not seen at her best. She sits twisting her gloved hands, pulling at a loose thread, now and then biting it. Otherwise she bites her lips; her face is drawn, and she stares in front of her with only a twist of the eye now and then towards her husband, who is uncomfortable upon a chair a few feet away.

If one were asked to size up MR. STOCK, one would say: I am against him. The position of Man in the Hosiery does not show any special talents, and it does not get them; or if it does, they stay there. And MR. BRIGSTOCK stays there — just stays there — sums him up — sums up the position of him — to say that in their position they have energy enough to get a position; afterwards, in the terror — or sometimes only in the terror — their employers have not thought to dismiss them — they stay. Sometimes, though, the employers have the heart, and do. And what happens? Considered as a man rather than a wage earner, not that it is usual for us to consider him — he is one of those who happily for themselves, get married by women whom apparently no man much wants to marry. He is dressed to what he works in, dressed as a Third Man in Hosiery should be. He is, at the moment, as agitated as his wife, and as he has no nervous system, he is agitated with, is in a greater wretchedness.

On the other side of the room sits CHANCELLOR. Every large draper's should have as housewife a lady of a certain age, who is a body in her own person the more she will expect in the young under her. Decorum, sober thought, tidiness, respect of money — these are the qualities necessary to a shop-assistant. MISS CHANCELLOR has them. They are genuine too. She is now planted on her chair, as it might be said, with easy authority, but looking at one may see that it is a deep resentment keeping her there immovable.

In the middle of the room, by the fire, sits MISS YATES. While she has been this long time the other three have been hard to keep their eyes off her. It isn't easy; partly because she is in the middle of the room, partly because they are not. But anyhow at the end of the room, where, MISS YATES is a woman that you look at, though you don't mean to wonder why. She is no means pretty, nor does she mean to attract you. But you look

As you look at a fire or a light in an otherwise empty room. She is not a lady, nor is she well educated, and ten years' shop-assisting has left its marks on her. But there is. To the seeing eye she glows in that room like a live coal. She is a genius — she has life, to however low a use she — or the world — may put it. And commoner people are lustreless beside her.

Wait silently, and the tension increases. At last it is slightly relieved by PHILIP's arrival. He comes briskly, his hat on, a number of unopened letters in his hand. They set up to receive him with varying degrees of respect and apprehension.

PHILIP. Good morning, Miss Chancellor. Good morning, Miss Yates. Good morning, Mr. Brigstock.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [introducing her]. Brigstock.

[PHILIP nods pleasantly to MRS. BRIGSTOCK, who purses her lips in a half-frightened, half-vengeful way, and sits down again. Then he puts his hat on the mantelpiece and settles himself in the master position at the table]

PHILIP. I'm afraid I've kept you long a little. Well, now —

[There is a sharp knock at the door]

[It is BELHAVEN. BELHAVEN is seventeen, perhaps, on the climb from office boy to clerk, of the usual pattern. PHILIP greets him pleasantly]

Good morning, Belhaven.

BELHAVEN. I've put Major Thomas in your room, sir, as the papers were, but Mr. Huxtable's is empty, I'd like . . .

PHILIP. No, this'll do.

BELHAVEN. Major Thomas said you speak to him for a minute, now as you came.

PHILIP. I'll go in now.

BELHAVEN. Thank you, sir.

PHILIP. [To the waiting four] Excuse me one minute, please.

[BELHAVEN bolts back to his outer office by one door — his way of opening and getting through it is a labour-saving invention; and PHILIP goes to find THOMAS

through the other. There is silence again, held by these four at a greater tension than ever. At last MRS. BRIGSTOCK, least able to bear it, gives one desperate wriggle-fidget. BRIGSTOCK looks at her deprecatingly and says . . .]

MR. BRIGSTOCK. Will you sit here, Freda, if you feel the draught?

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [just trusting herself to answer]. No, thank you.

[Silence again, but soon broken by PHILIP, who comes from the other room, throwing over his shoulder the last of his few words with THOMAS, "All right, Tommy." TOMMY, even at the dulllest business, always pleasantly amuses him. Then he settles himself at the table for the second time, conciliatory, kind]

PHILIP. Well, now . . .

[MRS. BRIGSTOCK, determined to be first heard, lets slip the torrent of her wrath]

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. It's slander, Mr. Madras, and I request that it shall be retracted immediately . . . before everybody . . . in the public press . . . by advertisement.

MR. BRIGSTOCK [in an agonised whisper]. Oh, Freda . . . not so headstrong.

[PHILIP is elaborately cool and good tempered]

PHILIP. Miss Chancellor.

[MISS CHANCELLOR is even more elaborately cold and dignified]

MISS CHANCELLOR. Yes, sir.

PHILIP. I think we might inform Mrs. Brigstock that we're sorry the accusation has become so public . . . it has naturally caused her some pain.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [ascending the scale]. I don't believe it . . . I didn't believe it . . . if I'd have believed it —

MR. BRIGSTOCK [interposing]. Oh, Freda!

MISS CHANCELLOR [very definitely]. I saw them kissing. I didn't know Mr. Brigstock was a married man. And even if I had known it . . . I saw them kissing.

[MISS YATES, opening her mouth for the first time, shows an easy impatience of their anger and their attitudes, too]

MISS YATES. Oh . . . what sort of a kiss?

MISS CHANCELLOR. Are there different sorts of kisses, Miss Yates?

MISS YATES. Well . . . aren't there?

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*growing shrill now*]. He owns he did that, and he knows he shouldn't have, and he asked my pardon . . . and whose business is it, but mine . . . ?

MR. BRIGSTOCK [*vainly interposing this time*]. Oh, Freda!

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*climbing to hysterics*]. Hussy to let him . . . hussy . . . hussy!

[*PHILIP adds a little severity to his coolness*]

PHILIP. Mrs. Brigstock.

MISS YATES [*as pleasant as possible*]. All right . . . Mr. Madras, I don't mind.

PHILIP. But I do. Mrs. Brigstock, I shall not attempt to clear up this business unless we can all manage to keep our tempers.

[*MISS YATES collectedly explains*]

MISS YATES. I've been friends with Mr. Brigstock these twelve years. We both came into the firm together . . . and I knew he was married . . . p'raps I'm the only one that did. And when I told him . . . all I chose to tell him as to what had happened to me . . . I asked him to kiss me just to show he didn't think so much the worse of me. And he gave me one kiss . . . here. [*She dabs with one finger the left top corner of her forehead*] And that is the truth of that.

PHILIP. You might have given this explanation to Miss Chancellor.

MISS YATES. She wouldn't have believed it.

MISS CHANCELLOR. I don't believe it.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*with gathering force*]. William! William!! William!!!

[*BRIGSTOCK desperately musters a little authority*]

MR. BRIGSTOCK. Freda, be quiet . . . haven't I sworn it to you on the Bible?

[*MISS CHANCELLOR now puts her case*]

MISS CHANCELLOR. I may say I have known other young ladies in trouble and whether they behaved properly or improperly under the circumstances . . . and I've known them behave both . . . they did not confide in their gentlemen friends . . . without the best of reasons.

PHILIP. There is no reason that they shouldn't, Miss Chancellor.

MISS CHANCELLOR. They did.

MISS YATES. Well . . . I did.

MISS CHANCELLOR. I had no for the scandal to get about. I know how it happened.

MISS YATES. Ask your little friend, Miss Jordan, how it happened.

[*This shot tells. Miss Chancellor's voice sharpens*]

MISS CHANCELLOR. Mr. Madras, I am to be accused of favouritism.

PHILIP. Yes, yes . . . we'll get to the point, I think.

MISS CHANCELLOR. If Mr. Brigstock wasn't the man —

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*the spring to her*]. William!

MISS CHANCELLOR. Why should she tell me who it was?

MISS YATES. Why should I?

MISS CHANCELLOR. Am I to look after the morals of these young ladies, or am I not?

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. A set of humbug!

MR. BRIGSTOCK [*in agony*].

you'll get me the sack.

PHILIP. Brigstock, if I wish to give any one the sack, I should like to take the trouble to discuss the matter with you all in — I hope — a reasonable way.

[*MRS. BRIGSTOCK, much surprised at her own ing reasonableness, starts now to give battle*]

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. Oh, give him the sack, if you please, Mr. Madras. Time he had it for his own sake.

MR. BRIGSTOCK. No, Freda!

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. You've got to make in the world, haven't you? He's got to start on his own like other people, hasn't he?

MR. BRIGSTOCK [*feeling safer in his situation slipping*]. In time, yes.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. Now's the time. If you're not sick of the life you're leading . . . seeing me once a week for an hour or two . . . then I am sure this libel and slander makes about as much good as last straw, I should think.

PHILIP. How long have you been married, Mrs. Brigstock?

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. Four years.

PHILIP. Four years!

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*a little queer in her equable courtesy*]. Four years.

PHILIP [*in amazed impatience*]. Dear Brigstock, why not have told the firm and told them? It would have been arranged for you to go out with your wife.

MR. BRIGSTOCK. Well, I have been thinking of it lately, sir, but I never thought it would happen on a really likely day. I'm afraid I'm not a favourite in the department.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. No fault of his!

MR. BRIGSTOCK. And it's sometimes a very little thing makes the difference between a feller's going and staying when all those that aren't wanted are cleared out after sale time, I mean, for instance. And, of course, the thirty days a year they allow you to live in does not keep you . . . it's no use my saying it does. And when I'm married . . .

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*who has gathered her grievances again*]. I agreed to it for my profession, too. We've been going quicker. It's three hundred pounds now, all but a bit . . . that's enough to start on. I've got my eye on the premises. It's near here, I don't mind telling you. Why shouldn't I go as well as others . . . and ride in my carriages when we're fifty!

MR. BRIGSTOCK [*deprecating such optimism*]. Well, I've asked advice.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. You think too much of advice. If you'd value your money higher! Give him the sack, if you please, Mr. Madras, and I'll say good-bye to you.

[*She finishes, and suddenly Miss Yates takes up this part of the tale quite otherwise*]

MISS YATES. He has asked my advice, and I've told him to stay where he is.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*her breath leaving*]. Oh, indeed!

MISS YATES. He's as steady as can be. But his appearance is against him.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*hardly recovering*]. Well, I never!

MR. BRIGSTOCK. A feller does think of the future, Marion.

MISS YATES. I wouldn't if I were you. I don't know where we all get to when we're fifty, and I've never known anyone who did. We're not in the shop any longer, most of us, are we? And we're not all in our carriages.

MR. BRIGSTOCK [*meekly*]. I suppose it can be done.

MISS YATES. Oh . . . premises near the bank and three hundred pounds. Perfect foolery, and William ought to have seen it. This firm'll undersell you and eat you up and a dozen more like

you . . . and the place that's trusted you for your stock will sell up every stick, and there you'll be in the gutter. I advised him to own up to you [*she nods at MRS. BRIGSTOCK*] and live out and do the best he could.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*more drenched with the cold water than she'll own*]. I'm much obliged, I'm sure . . . I've my own opinion. . . .

PHILIP [*who has been studying her rather anxiously*]. You've no children, Mrs. Brigstock?

[*MRS. BRIGSTOCK goes white*]

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. No, I've no children. How can you save when you have children? But if it was his child this hussy was going to have, and I thought God wouldn't strike him dead on the spot, I'd do it myself, so I would . . . and he knows I would.

MR. BRIGSTOCK. Haven't I taken my oath to you, Freda?

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. How can I tell if he's speaking the truth . . . I ask you how can I tell? I lie awake at night away from him till I could scream with thinking about it. And I do scream as loud as I dare . . . not to wake the house. And if somebody don't open that window, I shall go off.

PHILIP. Open the window, please, Mr. Brigstock.

[*PHILIP'S voice is serious, though he says but a simple thing.*

MR. BRIGSTOCK opens the window as a man may do in a sick room, helpless, a little dazed. Then he turns back to his wife, who is sitting, head tilted against the sharp back of the plush bench, eyes shut, mouth open. Only MISS YATES is ready with her bit of practical comfort!]

MISS YATES. Look here, don't you worry. I could have married William if I'd wanted to. That ought to be proof enough.

MR. BRIGSTOCK. There you are, Freda.

MISS YATES. Before he knew you.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [*opening her eyes*]. Did you ask her?

MISS YATES. No, he never asked me . . . but you know what I mean.

[*MISS YATES gives emphasis to this with what one fears must be described as a wink.* MRS.

BRIGSTOCK looks at the acquiescent BRIGSTOCK and acknowledges the implication]

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. Yes, I know. Oh, I don't believe it really.

[Comforted, she discovers her handkerchief and blows her nose, after which MISS CHANCELLOR, who has been sitting all this while still, silent, and scornful, inquires in her politest voice]

MISS CHANCELLOR. Do you wish me still to remain, Mr. Madras?

PHILIP. One moment.

MISS YATES. Oh, you'll excuse my back, sir.

[And she turns to the table again]

PHILIP. I don't think I need detain you any longer, Mr. and Mrs. Brigstock. Your character is now quite clear in the firm's eyes, Brigstock, and I shall see that arrangements are made for you to live out in the future. I apologise to you both for all this unpleasantness.

[They have both risen at this, and now BRIGSTOCK begins, hesitatingly]

MR. BRIGSTOCK. Well . . . thank you . . . sir . . . and . . .

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. No, William.

MR. BRIGSTOCK. All right, Freda! [He struggles into his prepared speech] We are very much obliged to you, sir, but I do not see how I can remain with the firm unless there has been, with regard to the accusation, some definite retraction.

PHILIP [near the end of his patience]. My good man, it is retracted.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. Publicly.

PHILIP. Nonsense, Mrs. Brigstock.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK [quite herself again]. Is it indeed . . . how would you like it? [Then becoming self-conscious] Well, I beg pardon. I'm sure we're very sorry for Miss Yates, and I wish she were married.

MISS YATES [with some gusto]. So do I!

[Suddenly MISS CHANCELLOR bursts out]

MISS CHANCELLOR. Then you wicked girl, why didn't you say so before . . . when I wished to be kind to you? And we shouldn't all be talking in this outrageous, indecent way. I never did in all my life. I don't know how I manage to sit here. Didn't I try to be kind to you?

MISS YATES [unconquerable]. Yes,

and you tried to cry over me. I don't wish I were married.

MR. BRIGSTOCK. Of course it is for me to say, Marion, but in any way you're going on now stopping other young ladies tattling?

[The tone of the dispute sharpens rather dangerously]

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. How's Mr. Brigstock to remain in the firm if the Chancellor does?

PHILIP. That is my business, Brigstock.

MISS CHANCELLOR. What was he doing when I saw him kissing her . . . kissing her!

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. William!

PHILIP. That has been explained.

MISS CHANCELLOR. No, Mr. Brigstock, while I'm housekeeper here I won't countenance loose behaviour. I don't believe one word of these excuses.

PHILIP. This is just obstinacy, Chancellor.

MISS CHANCELLOR. And perhaps I wish to reiterate every single time I said.

[And now it degenerates into wrangle]

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. Then the firm shall deal with you.

MISS CHANCELLOR. You can do so at once, if you like, Mr. Brigstock.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. It's libellous, it's slander . . . !

MR. BRIGSTOCK. Oh, Freda, don't!

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. Yes, and she shall be put in prison for it.

MISS CHANCELLOR. If Miss Yates and Mr. Brigstock stay with this firm, I go.

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. And she shall be put in prison . . . the cat!

MR. BRIGSTOCK. Don't, Freda!

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. The heartless man! Do you swear it isn't true, William?

PHILIP. Take your wife away from the stock.

[PHILIP's sudden vehemence drives MRS. BRIGSTOCK to the edge of her seat, straight for the edge of her seat, control — and over it]

MRS. BRIGSTOCK. Yes, and he shall get himself away . . . leaves the firm. I should think so, and sorry to hear that you'll be before we've done. I don't know what the law will say to her . . . they're not a hundred yards off from the better side of the street, and a plate glass window as yours.

. BRIGSTOCK. Do be quiet, Freda!
s. BRIGSTOCK [*in hysterics now*].
hundred pounds, and how much
Iaple have when he started . . .
uiteley . . . and damages, what's
e . . . And me putting up with
e I've led . . . !

[*They wait till the fit subsides —*
PHILIP *with kindly impatience*,
BRIGSTOCK *in mute apology —*
and MRS. BRIGSTOCK *is a mass*
of sobs. Then BRIGSTOCK edges
her towards the door]

PHILIP. Wait . . . wait . . . wait.
can't go into the passage making
noise.

s. BRIGSTOCK. Oh, Freda, you
mean it.

s. BRIGSTOCK [*relieved and con-*
I'm sure I hope I've said noth-
becoming a lady . . . I didn't
to.

PHILIP. Not at all . . . it's natural
ould be upset.

s. BRIGSTOCK. And we're very
obliged for your kind intentions

PHILIP. Wait till you're quite calm.

s. BRIGSTOCK. Thank you.
[*Then with a final touch of injury,*
resentment, dignity, she shakes
off BRIGSTOCK's timid hold]

s. BRIGSTOCK. You needn't hold
William.

[*WILLIAM follows her out to for-*
get and make her forget it all
as best he can. PHILIP comes
back to his chair, still good-
humoured, but not altogether
pleased with his own part in
the business so far]

PHILIP. I'm afraid you've put your-
the wrong, Miss Chancellor.

s. CHANCELLOR. One often does,
a doing one's duty. [*Then her*
ises to a sort of swan song] Thirty
have I been with the firm . . .
thirty years. I will leave to-
day.

PHILIP. I hope you recognise it
ot be my fault if you have to.

s. CHANCELLOR. Miss Yates can
e it. She has only to speak the

[*PHILIP now makes another effort*
to be frank and kindly]

PHILIP. Miss Chancellor, are we
appreciating the situation from
Yates's point of view? Suppose
we married?

s. YATES. I'm not married.

PHILIP. But if you told us you
were, we should have to believe you.

MISS CHANCELLOR. Why, Mr. Mad-
ras?

PHILIP [*with a smile*]. It would be
good manners to believe her. We must
believe so much of what we're told in
this world.

MISS YATES [*who has quite caught on*].
Well, I did mean to stick that up on
you . . . if anyone wants to know.
I bought a wedding ring, and I had it
on when I saw Dr. Willoughby. But
when she came in with her long face
and her What can I do for you, my
poor child? . . . well, I just couldn't
. . . I suppose the Devil tempted me,
and I told her the truth.

PHILIP. That's as I thought, so far.
Miss Yates, have you that wedding
ring with you?

MISS YATES. Yes, I have . . . it's
not real gold.

PHILIP. Put it on.

[*MISS YATES, having fished it out*
of a petticoat pocket, rather
wonderingly does so, and PHILIP
turns, maliciously humorous,
to MISS CHANCELLOR]

PHILIP. Now where are we, Miss
Chancellor?

MISS CHANCELLOR. I think we're
mocking at a very sacred thing, Mr.
Madras.

MISS YATES. Yes . . . and I won't
now.

[*With a sudden access of emotion*
she slams the ring upon the
table. PHILIP meditates for a
moment on the fact that there
are some things in life still in-
accessible to his light-hearted
logic]

PHILIP. True . . . true . . . I beg
both your pardons. But suppose the
affair had not got about, Miss Yates?

MISS YATES. Well . . . I should
have had a nice long illness. It'd all
depend on whether you wanted me
enough to keep my place open.

PHILIP. You are an employee of
some value to the firm.

MISS YATES. I reckoned you would.
Miss McIntyre'd be pleased to stay
on a bit now she's quarrelled with her
fiancé. Of course if I'd only been
behind the counter . . .

MISS CHANCELLOR [*who has drawn*
the longest of breaths at this calculated
immodesty]. This is how she brazened
it out to me, Mr. Madras. This is

just what she told Mr. Huxtable . . . and you'll pardon my saying he took a very different view of the matter to what you seem to be taking.

MISS YATES. Oh, I've got to go, now I'm found out . . . I'm not arguing about it.

MISS CHANCELLOR [*severely*]. Mr. Madras, what sort of notions are you fostering in this wretched girl's mind?

PHILIP [*gently enough*]. I was trying for a moment to put myself in her place.

MISS CHANCELLOR. You will excuse me saying, sir, that you are a man . . .

PHILIP. Not at all!

[*A poor joke, but MISS CHANCELLOR remains unconscious of it*]

MISS CHANCELLOR. Because a woman is independent, and earning her living, she's not to think she can go on as she pleases. If she wishes to have children, Providence has provided a way in the institution of marriage. Miss Yates would have found little difficulty in getting married, I gather.

MISS YATES. Living in here for twelve years!

MISS CHANCELLOR. Have you been a prisoner, Miss Yates? Not to mention that there are two hundred and thirty-five gentlemen employed here.

MISS YATES. Supposing I don't like any of em?

MISS CHANCELLOR. My dear Miss Yates, if you are merely looking for a husband as such . . . well . . . we're all God's creatures, I suppose. Personally, I don't notice much difference in men, anyway.

MISS YATES. Nor did I.

MISS CHANCELLOR. Lack of self-control . . .

MISS YATES. Is it!

MISS CHANCELLOR. . . . And self-respect. That's what the matter is. Are we beasts of the field, I should like to know? I simply do not understand this unladylike attitude towards the facts of life. Is there nothing for a woman to do in the world but to run after men . . . or pretend to run away from them? I am fifty-eight . . . and I have passed, thank God, a busy and a happy and I hope a useful life . . . and I have never thought any more or less of men than I have of any other human beings . . . or any differently. I look upon spinsterhood as an honourable state, as my Bible teaches me to. Men are different.

But some women marry happily well . . . and all women can't and some can't marry at all. facts have to be faced, I take it.

PHILIP. We may take it that Yates has been facing them.

MISS CHANCELLOR. Yes, sir, what spirit? I have always deavoured to influence the ladies under my control towards virtues of modesty and decorum so that they may regard either with an indifferent mind. If I no longer do that, I prefer to resign charge. I will say before this person that I regret the story I have got about. But when a man has committed a fault it seems immaterial who knows of it.

PHILIP [*reduced to irony*]. Do you really think so?

MISS CHANCELLOR. Do you mean any more now?

PHILIP. I am glad to have your explanation. We'll have a talk to-morrow.

MISS CHANCELLOR. Thank you. I think that will be more in Good morning.

PHILIP. Good morning.

[*MISS CHANCELLOR has expressed herself to her entire satisfaction and retires in good*

MISS YATES, conscientiously brazen until the enemy quite disappeared, collapses theatrically. And PHILIP, at ease at last, begins to relax her in a most brotherly manner

MISS YATES. I'm sure she's right in all she says.

PHILIP. She may not be. But you the sort of woman to have yourself into a scrape of this Miss Yates?

MISS YATES. I'm glad you're not, sir.

PHILIP. Then what on earth you go and do it for?

MISS YATES. I don't know didn't mean to.

PHILIP. Why aren't you married?

MISS YATES. That's my business. [*Then, as if making amends for sudden snap*] Oh . . . I've thought of getting married any time these twelve years. But look what happens look at the Brigstocks . . .

PHILIP. No, no, no . . . that's not what I mean. Why aren't you married even now?

MISS YATES. I'd rather not say.

[MISS YATES assumes an air of reticence natural enough; but there is something a little peculiar in the manner of it, so PHILIP thinks]

PHILIP. Very well.

MISS YATES. I'd rather not talk about that part of it, sir, with you, if you don't mind. [Then she bursts out] I took the risk. I knew what was about. I wanted to have my fun. And it was fun for a bit. That's horrid, I know, but it was.

[PHILIP is watching her]

PHILIP. Miss Yates, I've been standing for you, haven't I?

MISS YATES. Yes.

PHILIP. That's because I have unconventional opinions. But I don't do conventional things.

MISS YATES [naïvely]. Why don't

PHILIP. I shouldn't do them well. You start on this adventure because all the other people say, so you're not happy about you. As man after man, Miss Yates . . . were you in a position to run this risk?

[MISS YATES honestly thinks before she speaks]

MISS YATES. Yes . . . I shall be getting a hundred and forty a year out. I've planned it all. [She speaks happily confidential] There's a net at Raynes Park, and I can have a cheap girl to look after it and to take care of . . . I shall call him my new boy, like the Popes of Rome used to. . . or why can't I be a widow? I shall bring him up and do him well. . . Insurance'll be a bit stiff in the beginning if anything happens to me. But I've got nearly two hundred saved in the bank to see me through till next year.

PHILIP. Where are you going when you leave here? What relations have

MISS YATES. I have an aunt. I shall see her.

PHILIP. Where are you going for the winter?

MISS YATES. Evercreech.

PHILIP. Where's that?

MISS YATES. I don't know. You can find it from Waterloo. I found it in the A. B. C.

PHILIP [in protest]. But my dear

MISS YATES. Well, I want a place

where nobody knows me, so I'd better go to one which I don't know, hadn't I? I always make friends. I'm not afraid of people. And I've never been in the country in the winter. I want to see what it's like.

[PHILIP surrenders, on this point beaten; but takes up another more seriously]

PHILIP. Well . . . granted that you don't want a husband . . . it's your obvious duty to make the man help you support his child.

[MISS YATES is ready for it; serious, too]

MISS YATES. I daresay. But I won't. I've known other girls in this sort of mess—one or two . . . with everybody being kind to them and sneering at them. And there they sat and cried, and were ashamed of themselves! What's the good of that? And the fellows hating them. Well, I don't want him to hate me. He can forget all about it if he likes . . . and of course he will. I started by crying my eyes out. Then I thought that if I couldn't buck up and anyway pretend to be pleased and jolly well proud, I might as well die. And d'you know when I'd been pretending a bit I found that I really was pleased and proud. . . And I am really proud and happy about it now, sir . . . I am not pretending. I daresay I've done wrong . . . perhaps I ought to come to grief altogether, but—

[At this moment a telephone in the table rings violently, and MISS YATES apologises—to it, apparently]

MISS YATES. Oh, I beg pardon.

PHILIP. Excuse me. [Then answering] Yes. Who? No, no, no. . . State. Mr. State. Put him through. [He is evidently put through] Morning! Who? My father . . . not yet. Yes, from Marienbad.

[MISS YATES gets up, apparently to withdraw tactfully, but looking a little startled, too]

MISS YATES. Shall I . . .

PHILIP. No, no; it's all right.

[BELHAVEN knocks, comes in, and stands waiting by PHILIP, who telephones on]

PHILIP. Yes? Well? . . . Who . . . Mark who? . . . Aurelius. No. I've not been reading him lately . . . Certainly I will . . . Thomas is here doing

figures . . . d'you want him . . . I'll put you through. . . . No, wait. I'll call him here, if it's not private. [*Then calling out*] Tommy!

BELHAVEN. Major Thomas is in the counting house, sir.

PHILIP. Oh. [*Then through the telephone*] If you'll hold the line I can get him in a minute. Say Mr. State's on the telephone for him, Belhaven.

BELHAVEN. Yes, sir . . . and Mrs. Madras is below in a taxicab, sir, and would like to speak to you. Shall she come up, or, if you're too busy to be interrupted, will you come down to her?

PHILIP. My mother?

BELHAVEN. No, not Mrs. Madras . . . your Mrs. Madras, sir.

PHILIP. Bring her up. And tell Major Thomas.

BELHAVEN. Yes, sir.

[*BELHAVEN achieves a greased departure, and PHILIP turns back to MISS YATES*]

PHILIP. Where were we?

MISS YATES [*inconsequently*]. It is hot in here, isn't it?

PHILIP. The window's open.

MISS YATES. Shall I shut it?

[*She turns and goes up to the window; one would say to run away from him. PHILIP watches her steadily*]

PHILIP. What's the matter, Miss Yates?

[*She comes back more collectedly*]

MISS YATES. Oh, I'm sure Miss Chancellor can't expect me to marry one like that now . . . can she?

PHILIP. Marry who?

MISS YATES. Not that I say anything against Mr. Belhaven . . . a very nice young man. And, indeed, I rather think he did try to propose last Christmas. The fact is, y'know, it's almost the very young men that ever do ask you to marry them here. When they get older they seem to lose heart . . . or they think it'll cost too much . . . or . . . but anyway, I'm sure it's not important . . .

[*This very out-of-place chatter dies away under PHILIP's sternly enquiring gaze*]

PHILIP. There's one more thing I'm afraid I ought to ask you. This trouble hasn't come about in any way by our sending you up to Bond Street, has it?

MISS YATES [*diving into many words again*]. Oh, of course it was most

kind of you to send me to Bond Street to get a polish on one's manners . . . but I tell you . . . I couldn't stand it for long. Those ladies . . . you get coming in there . . . it does just break your nerve! . . . with following them about, and the things they say you've got to hear and the things they'll say . . . you half the time . . . that you got not to hear . . . and keep your voice low and sweet, and let your arms hang down straight. You work more hours in this place than I daresay it's commoner, but the customers are friendly with you.

PHILIP. . . . Because, you see, Huxtable and I would feel a little responsible if it was anyone coming with us who . . .

MISS YATES [*quite desperately*]. You needn't . . . indeed you needn't . . . I will say there's something about that other place that does set my mind going about men. What happens in me I never could think . . . honestly I couldn't, though I think a good deal of myself, I can assure you. It was my own fault, and so's all this of it going to be . . . my very own

[*MAJOR THOMAS's arrival is to PHILIP a very welcome interruption as she seems, perhaps by the habit of PHILIP's steady look, getting nearer and nearer to just what she means not to say. She comes in at a good speed, glances back along the passage, and then says—*]

THOMAS. Here's Jessica.

PHILIP. State on the telephone.

THOMAS. Thank you.

[*And he makes for it as JESSICA comes to the open door. PHILIP's wife is the epitome of all that æsthetic culture can do for a woman. More than that is the result—not of thirty years—but of three or four generations of cumulative refinement. She might be a race horse! Consider the thing, it is a very wonderful thing to have raised this creature to ladyhood. Creatures, dainty in mind and body, gentle in thought and charming, delicate, sensitive, graceful, chaste, credulous of all good, shunning the world's ugliness and strife, and in very ease and delightfulness of*]

existence; fastidious — fastidious — astidious; also in these latter years with their attractions more generally altered by the addition of learning and humour. Is not the perfect lady perhaps the most wonderful achievement of civilisation, and worth the cost of her breeding, worth the toil and the helotage of — all the others? JESSICA MADRAS is even something more than a lady, for she is conscious of her ladyhood. She values her virtue and her charm: she is proud of her culture, and fosters it. It is her weapon; it justifies her. As she floats now into the ugly room, exquisite from her eyelashes to her toes, it is a great relief — just the sight of her]

JESSICA. Am I interrupting?

PHILIP. No, come in, my dear.

THOMAS [into the telephone]. Hullo!

PHILIP. Well, Miss Yates, I want to see, if I can, that you are not more roughly treated than people with the weight of their opinions always are.

THOMAS. Hullo!

PHILIP. Oh, you don't know my Jessica, this is Miss Yates, who has your costume room. You're not really working in your department I suppose?

MISS YATES. [As defiant of all scandal I am.]

THOMAS. [Still to the unresponsive one.] Hullo! Hullo!

PHILIP. [Finding MISS YATES beyond possibly above him.] Very well. I'll do now.

[But MISS YATES, by the presence of JESSICA, is now brought to her best costume department manner. She can assume at will, it seems, a new face, a new voice; can become, indeed, a black-silk being of another species]

MISS YATES. Thank you, sir. I'm sure I hope I've not talked too much. I was a chatterbox, madam.

PHILIP. You had some important things to say, Miss Yates.

MISS YATES. Not at all, sir. Good evening, madam.

JESSICA. Good morning.

[And there is an end of MISS YATES. Meanwhile, the telephone is reducing THOMAS to impotent fury]

THOMAS. They've cut him off.

[While he turns the handle fit to break it, JESSICA produces an opened telegram, which she hands to PHILIP]

JESSICA. This . . . just after you left.

PHILIP. My dear, coming all this way with it! Why didn't you telephone?

THOMAS [hearing something at last]. Hullo . . . is that Mr. State's office? No! Well . . . Counting house, are you still through to it?

[JESSICA is watching, with an amused smile]

JESSICA. I hate the telephone, especially the one here. Hark at you, Tommy, poor wretch! They put you through from office to office . . . six different clerks . . . all stupid, and all with hideous voices.

[PHILIP has now read his telegram, and is making a face]

PHILIP. Well, I suppose she must come, if she wants to.

JESSICA. What'll your father say?

PHILIP. My dear girl . . . she has a right to see him if she insists . . . it's very foolish. Here, Tommy! [He ousts him from the telephone and deals expertly with it] I want a telegram sent. Get double three double O Central, and plug through to my room . . . not here . . . my room.

THOMAS [jervently]. Thank yer.

JESSICA. Got over your anger at the play last night?

THOMAS. Oh, sort of play you must expect if you go to the theatre on a Sunday. Seuse me.

[Having admirably sized up JESSICA and her costume, he bolts.

PHILIP sits down to compose his telegram in reply. JESSICA, discovering that there is nothing attractive to sit on, hovers]

PHILIP. Can you put her up for the night?

JESSICA. Yes.

PHILIP. Shall I ask her to dinner?

JESSICA. She'll cry into the soup . . . but I suppose it doesn't matter.

PHILIP. Dinner at eight?

JESSICA. I sound inhospitable.

PHILIP. Well, I've only said we shall be delighted.

JESSICA. But your mother dislikes me so. It's difficult to see much of her.

PHILIP. You haven't much patience with her, have you, Jessica?

JESSICA. Have you?

PHILIP [*whimsically*]. I've known her longer than you have.

JESSICA [*with the nicest humour*]. I only wish she wouldn't write Mildred silly letters about God.

PHILIP. A grandmother's privilege.

JESSICA. The child sends me on another one this morning . . . did I tell you?

PHILIP. No.

JESSICA. Miss Gresham writes, too. She puts it quite nicely. But it's an awful thing for a school to get religion into it.

[*BELHAVEN slides in*]

BELHAVEN. Yessir.

PHILIP. Send this at once, please.

BELHAVEN. Yessir.

[*BELHAVEN slides out. Then PHILIP starts attending to the little pile of letters he brought in with him. JESSICA, neglected, hovers more widely*]

JESSICA. Will you come out to lunch, Phil?

PHILIP. Lord! is it lunch time?

JESSICA. It will be soon. I'm lunching with Margaret Inman and Walter Muirhead at the Dieudonné.

PHILIP. Then you won't be lonely.

JESSICA [*mischievous*]. Margaret may be if you don't come.

PHILIP. I can't, Jessica. I'm not nearly through.

[*She comes to rest by his table, and starts to play with the things on it, finding at last a blotting roller that gives satisfaction*]

JESSICA. Phil, you might come out with me a little more than you do.

PHILIP [*humorously final*]. My dear, not at lunch time.

JESSICA. Ugly little woman you'd been scolding when I came in.

PHILIP. I didn't think so.

JESSICA. Are ugly women as attractive as ugly men?

PHILIP. D'you know . . . I don't find that women attract me.

JESSICA. What a husband!

PHILIP. D'you want them to?

JESSICA. Yes . . . in theory.

PHILIP. Why, Jessica?

JESSICA [*with charming finesse*]. For my own sake. Last day of Walter's pictures. He has sold all but about five . . . and there's one I wish you'd buy.

PHILIP. Can't afford it.

JESSICA. I suppose, Phil, you're altogether sorry you married me?

[*Although PHILIP is used to her charming and ready in consequence, he really just*]

PHILIP. Good heavens, Jess! Well, we've got through eleven haven't we?

[*JESSICA puts her head on one side and is quite half serious*]

JESSICA. Are you in the least sorry you married me?

PHILIP. My dear . . . I don't think about it. Jessica, I cannot keep this game of repartee.

[*She floats away at once, seriously snubbed and hurt*]

JESSICA. I'm sorry. I know I'm interrupting.

PHILIP [*remorseful at once, for she is so pretty*]. No, no! I didn't mean that. These aren't important.

[*But he goes on with his letter, and JESSICA stands looking at him, her face hardening a little*]

JESSICA. But there are times when I get tired of waiting for you to write your letters.

PHILIP. I know . . . I never finish my letters now-a-days. You've got a fit of the idle-fidgets this morning . . . that's what brings you after me. Shall we hire a motor car for the weekend?

[*THOMAS bundles into the tête-à-tête, saying as he comes . . .*]

THOMAS. He'll make you an excellent place here, Phil.

PHILIP. Good!

[*JESSICA stands there, looking at him, her face hardening a little*]

JESSICA. Tommy, come out to lunch . . . Phil won't.

THOMAS. I'm afraid I can't.

JESSICA. I've got to meet Mr. Inman and young Muirhead. I'll flirt with her all the time. If it isn't a fourth I shall be fearfully in the cold.

PHILIP [*overcome by such temptation*]. Oh, Jessica!

[*THOMAS is nervous, apparently at least he is neither ready nor gallant*]

THOMAS. Yes, of course you can't. But I'm afraid I can't.

JESSICA [*in cheerful despair*]. Well, I won't drive to Peckham again this morning. Wednesday, then, will I call for me?

OMAS. Wednesday?
 SSICA. Symphony Concert.
 OMAS [*with sudden seriousness*].
 I know, I'm afraid I can't on
 Wednesday, either.

SSICA. Why not?
 OMAS [*though the pretence withers
 a certain sharpness in her question*].
 . . . I'm afraid I can't.

[*It is evident that JESSICA has a
 temper bred to a point of con-
 trol which makes it nastier,
 perhaps. She now becomes very
 cold, very civil, very swift*]
 SSICA. We settled it only last
 . . . What's the time?

ILIP. Five to one.
 SSICA. I must go. I shall be late.
 OMAS [*with great concern*]. Have
 not a cab?

SSICA. I think so.
 OMAS. We might do the next,
 ps.

SSICA. All right, Tommy . . .
 be conscience-stricken. But when
 change your mind about going
 with me it's pleasanter if you'll
 come excuse. Good-bye, you two.

[*And she is gone; PHILIP calling
 after her —*]

ILIP. I shall be in by seven, my

[*THOMAS looks a little relieved,
 and then considerably worried;
 in fact, he frowns portentously.*

PHILIP disposes of his last
 letter]

ILIP. We've so organised the
 's work as to make companionship
 between men and women a very artificial

OMAS [*without interest*]. Have we?
 ILIP. I think so. What have we
 to settle before this afternoon?

OMAS. Nothing much. [*Then
 ng to make up his mind to some-*
 But I want three minutes' talk
 you, old man.

ILIP. Oh!
 [*And he gets up and stretches*]

OMAS. D'you mind if I say some-
 eadish?

ILIP. No.
 OMAS. Put your foot down and
 have me asked to your house
 so much.

[*PHILIP looks at him for half a
 puzzled minute*]

ILIP. Why not?

OMAS. I'm seeing too much of
 wife.

[*He is so intensely solemn about
 it that PHILIP can hardly even
 pretend to be shocked*]

PHILIP. My dear Tommy!

THOMAS. I don't mean one single
 word more than I say.

PHILIP [*good-naturedly*]. Tommy,
 you always have flirted with Jessica.

THOMAS. I don't want you to think
 that I'm the least bit in love with her.

PHILIP. Naturally, not . . . you've
 got a wife of your own.

THOMAS [*in intense brotherly agree-
 ment*]. Right. That's good horse
 sense.

PHILIP. And though, as her hus-
 band, I'm naturally obtuse in the
 matter . . . I really don't think that
 Jessica is in love with you.

THOMAS [*most generously*]. Not for a
 single minute.

PHILIP. Then what's the worry, you
 silly old ass?

[*THOMAS starts to explain, a little
 tortuously*]

THOMAS. Well, Phil, this is such a
 damned subtle world. I don't pretend
 to understand it, but in my old age I
 have got a sort of rule-of-thumb ex-
 perience to go by . . . which, mark
 you, I've paid for.

PHILIP. Well?

THOMAS. Phil, I don't like women,
 and I never did . . . but I'm hardly
 exaggerating when I say I married
 simply to get out of the habit of finding
 myself once every six months in such
 a position with one of them that I
 was supposed to be making love to
 her.

[*PHILIP is enjoying himself*]

PHILIP. What do they see in you,
 Tommy?

THOMAS. God knows, old man . . .
 I don't. And the time it took up!
 Of course I was as much in love with
 Mary as you like, or I couldn't have
 asked her to marry me. And I wouldn't
 be without her and the children now
 for all I ever saw. But I don't believe
 I'd have gone out of my way to get
 them if I hadn't been driven to it, old
 man, . . . driven to it. I'm not going
 to start the old game again now.

[*And he wags his head wisely*]

PHILIP. What's the accusation
 against Jessica? Let's have it in so
 many words.

[*THOMAS gathers himself up to
 launch the vindicating compli-
 ment effectively*]

THOMAS. She's a very accomplished and a very charming and a very sweet-natured woman. I consider she's an ornament to society.

PHILIP [*with equal fervour*]. You're quite right, Tommy, . . . what are we to do with them?

THOMAS [*it's his favourite phrase*]. What d'you mean?

PHILIP. Well . . . what's your trouble with her?

THOMAS [*tortuously still*]. There ain't any yet . . . but . . . well . . . I've been dreading for the last three weeks that Jessica would begin to talk to me about you. That's why I'm talking to you about her. [*Then, with a certain enjoyment of his shocking looseness of behaviour*] I am a cad!

PHILIP [*still amused — but now rather sub-acidly*]. My standing for the County Council must be a most dangerous topic.

THOMAS. But that's just how it begins. Then there's hints . . . quite nice ones . . . about how you get on with each other. Last night in the cab she was talking about when she was a girl . . .

PHILIP. I walked home. Tactful husband!

THOMAS. Phil . . . don't you be French.

[*PHILIP, suddenly serious, turns to him*]

PHILIP. But, Tommy, do you imagine that she is unhappy with me?

THOMAS. No, I don't. But she thinks a lot . . . when she's bored with calling on people, and her music and her pictures. And once you begin putting your feelings into words . . . why, they grow.

PHILIP. But if she were, I'd rather that she did confide in you.

[*THOMAS shakes his head vehemently*]

THOMAS. No.

PHILIP. Why shouldn't she? You're friends.

THOMAS. Yes . . . there's no reason . . . but I tell you it always begins that way.

PHILIP. You silly ass . . . can't you let a woman talk seriously to you without making love to her?

THOMAS. Damn it, that's what they say . . . but it never made any difference.

PHILIP. Tommy, you're a perfect child!

THOMAS. I remember when I twenty-four . . . there was one woman . . . years older than me . . . her grown-up son. She took to scolding me for wasting my time flirting. I told me she'd done it herself once . . . she told me why she'd done it. I kept kissing her for six weeks, and I'll tell you she never wanted me to kiss her. I did.

PHILIP. Did she box your ears?

THOMAS. No . . . she said she couldn't take me seriously. Well, if I'd gone away that would have been priggish. And if I'd stayed I'd have done it again.

PHILIP [*mischievously*]. Which do you do?

THOMAS. Oh . . . never you mind.

PHILIP [*with the utmost gentleness*]. Well . . . you have my permission to kiss Jessica, if you think she wants to.

THOMAS. Thanks, old man. That's very clever and up to date, all the rest of it . . . but I asked you to chuck me out of the house to that extent.

PHILIP. I'm not going to.

THOMAS. Then you're no friend of mine.

PHILIP. Let us put it quite bluntly. If Jessica chooses to be unfaithful to me, how am I to stop her . . . even if I've the right to stop her?

THOMAS. If you're not prepared to behave like a decent married man, you've no right to be married. You're a danger.

PHILIP. Also, Tommy, if you can't make me making love to your wife you mustn't talk to me . . . but you wouldn't talk to her about it.

THOMAS [*with a touch of sentimentality*]. Mary's different. [*Then protests again*] And I'm not making love to your wife. I told you so.

PHILIP. Then if she's making love to you, run away for yourself.

THOMAS. She isn't making love to me. But if you can't take a hint —

PHILIP. A hint! Well . . . I dashed!

THOMAS. Well, old man, I'll give you fair warning of the sort of fool I am . . . and I'll take no more responsibility in the matter.

PHILIP [*in comic desperation*]. I'll warn me . . . warn Jessica. Tell her you're afraid of making a fool of yourself with her. . . .

THOMAS [*his eyebrows up*]. But that'd be good as doing it. Good Lord, can't behave towards women as they were men!

PHILIP. Why not?

THOMAS. You try it.

PHILIP. I always do.

THOMAS. No wonder she wants to be able about you to me.

[PHILIP takes him seriously again]
PHILIP. Look here, Tommy, I know a pretty well. She doesn't want to be made love to.

THOMAS [*positively and finally*]. Yes, she does. [*Then with real chivalry*] I mean that unpleasantly . . . but women do. Some of em want to be loved and some want you to talk to them . . . but the principle's the same.

PHILIP [*finely contemptuous*]. What a life you live in!

THOMAS. . . . And the difficulty is that if I try to talk politics to them they don't know enough about it . . . or else that they know too much about it . . . and it's simpler to let them alone and have done.

PHILIP. Oh, much simpler!

THOMAS [*back to his starting point — ironic*]. But I'm married now, and I want a quiet life . . .

[A knock at the door interrupts him]

PHILIP. Come in.

[It is BELHAVEN]

BELHAVEN. Will you lunch, sir?

PHILIP. What is there?

BELHAVEN. I'm afraid only the usual, sir.

PHILIP. Can you manage the Usual, sir? What is it, Belhaven?

BELHAVEN. Boiled mutton and a pudding, I think, sir. [*Then as he is going to a vulgarly*] Roly-poly.

THOMAS [*with great approval*]. Right. I like it's strawberry jam.

PHILIP. Sure to be. Put it in Mr. Belhaven's room, will you . . . that's all.

BELHAVEN. Yessir.

[BELHAVEN vanishes]

THOMAS [*as on reflection*]. Not plum, sir. Plum's no use.

[PHILIP gathers up his papers]
PHILIP. I'll give the wicked woman her message.

[THOMAS takes alarm. He hadn't thought of this]

THOMAS. No . . . do it off your own bat. She won't mind, then.

PHILIP. Tommy, I cannot assume the turban of the Turk. My sense of humour and my sense of decency towards women won't let me.

THOMAS [*frowning*]. I believe I'd better not have told you.

PHILIP [*unsympathetic*]. Why not? Next to telling her, the most common-sense thing to do.

THOMAS. She won't think so.

PHILIP. She'll have to.

[*There is something so like cruelty in these three words that THOMAS stares at him. Then he says, reflectively*]

THOMAS. Phil, d'you ever thank God you're not a woman?

PHILIP. No.

THOMAS. When I think what most of em have to choose between is soft-hearted idiots like me and hard-headed devils like you . . . I wonder they put up with us as they do.

[PHILIP stares at him in turn with a queer smile. Then, as he turns to go . . .]

PHILIP. You've made it again, Tommy.

THOMAS. What?

PHILIP. Your one sensible remark. Come along.

[*And he is gone. THOMAS follows, protesting*]

THOMAS. Look here . . . what d'you mean by One Sensible Remark? It's like your infernal . . .

[*He pulls the door to after him. The room is alone with its ugliness*]

ACT III

In 1884 the Madras House was moved to its present premises in Bond Street. In those days decoration was mostly a matter of paint and wall-paper, but MR. CONSTANTINE MADRAS, ever daring, proceeded to beautify the home of his professional triumphs. He could neither draw nor colour, but he designed and saw to it all himself, and being a man of great force of character, produced something which, though extraordinarily wrong, was yet, since it was sincere, in a way effective. It added to his

reputation and to the attractiveness of the Madras House.

In twenty-six years there have been changes, but one room remains untouched from then till now. This is the rotunda, a large, lofty, sky-lighted place, done in the Moorish style. The walls are black marble to the height of a man, and from there to the ceiling the darkest red. The ceiling is of a cerulean blue, and in the middle of the skylight a golden sun, with spiked rays proceeding from its pleasant human countenance, takes credit for some of the light it intercepts. An archway with fretted top leads from the rest of the establishment. Another has behind it a platform, a few steps high, hung with black velvet. The necessary fireplace (were there hot-water pipes in 1884?) is disguised by a heavy multi-coloured canopy, whose fellow hangs over a small door opposite. On the floor is a Persian carpet of some real beauty. On the walls are gas brackets (1884 again!) the oriental touch achieved in their crescent shape. Round the wall are divans, many cushioned; in front of them little coffee-stools. It is all about as Moorish as Baker Street Station, but the general effect is humorous, pleasant, and even not undignified.

In the old, grand days of the Madras House the rotunda was the happy preserve of very special customers, those on whom the great man himself would keep an eye. If you had been there you spoke of it casually; indeed, to be free of the rotunda was to be a well-dressed woman and recognised by all society as such. Ichabod! Since MR. CONSTANTINE MADRAS retired, the Madras House is on the way to becoming almost like any other shop; the special customers are nobody in particular, and the rotunda is where a degenerate management meet to consider the choice of ready-made models from Paris. A large oval table had to be imported and half a dozen Moorish chairs. It seemed, to the surprise of the gentleman who went innocently ordering such things, that there were only that number in existence. Scene of its former glories, this is now to be the scene, perhaps, of the passing of the Madras House into alien hands.

Three o'clock on the Monday afternoon when the deal is to be put through possible, and it is now five minutes to. MAJOR THOMAS is there, sitting at the table; papers spread before him, racking his brains at a final figures. PHILIP is there rather a school-boyish mood. He is sitting on the table, swinging his legs. MR. HUXTABLE is there, dressed in his best, important nervous, and he is talking to EUSTACE PERRIN STATE.

MR. STATE is an American, and an American magazine literature anything to go by, no American altogether unlike him. He has a rugged, blood-and-iron sort of face, utterly belied by his soft, smiling eyes; rightly belied, too, for he made his thirty or forty millions the gentlest way—as far as he knows. You would not think of him as a money-maker. A matter of fact, he has no love for money, and little use for it, for his tastes are simple. But money-making is the honourable career in his own country, and he has the inclination for turning money over and over again, knock of doing so on a big scale. His shock of grey hair makes him look older than he probably is; his voice is almost childlike in its sweetness. He has the dignity and aptitude for command that put him in command.

From the little canopied dome comes WINDLESHAM, present manager of the establishment. He is a tailor-made man; and the tailor only got off for the wax modeller and the maker to begin. For his clothes are too perfect to be worn by any man but a dummy, and his hair and complexion are far from human. Not that he dyes or paints them, no, they were made like that. His voice is a little inhuman, too, as he prefers the French language with which he has a most intimate acquaintance, to his own, and he speaks English as much like French as his French is like English. His conversation seems as unreal as the rest of him. Impossible to get anything of him in any of the ordinary conditions of life. He is a functionary of Nature, the great inventor, who evolves, however roughly, what is necessary for her uses. Millions

... evolved the man-milliner. As he comes in — and he has the gait of a water-wagtail — MR. HUXTABLE is making conversation.

HUXTABLE. A perfect barometer you might say — when your tests used to it.

WINDLESHAM. [To PHILIP, and with his head back to the other room] I'm just ready.

STATE [smiling benevolently at HUXTABLE]. Is it really? The Palace! But what a sound as!

HUXTABLE [with modest pride]. A very healthy locality!

PHILIP. Come along and meet State.

[He jumps off the table, capturing WINDLESHAM'S arm]

STATE [enthusiastic]. Denmark Compliment to Queen Alexandra!

HUXTABLE [struck by the information]. Was it, now?

STATE. Herne Hill . . . Herne Hunter! That's the charm of it to an American. Association. spot speaks.

PHILIP [as he joins them]. This is Windlesham . . . our manager. Going to show us some new models.

[MR. STATE impressively extends a hand and repeats the name]

STATE. Mr. Windlesham.

WINDLESHAM. Most happy. I thought you'd like to see the very . . . brought them from Paris yesterday.

STATE. Most opportune! [with a sweeping gesture]. Mr. Windlesham, this room inspires me. Your design?

PHILIP. Yes.

STATE. I thought so.

PHILIP. That used to be his private

STATE [reverently]. Indeed! The Duchess went on her knees! Historic spot. Interesting to me!

PHILIP. Something of a legend that.

[MR. STATE, intensely solemn, seems now to ascend the pulpit of some philosophic conventicle]

STATE. I believe in legends, sir. They are the spiritual side of facts. They go to form tradition. And it is given to man to found his institution in security of mind except upon tradition. That is why our eyes turn to you from America, Mr. Windlesham.

MR. HUXTABLE [in some awe]. Do they, now?

MR. STATE. Has it never struck you that while the progress of man has been in the path of the sun, his thoughts continually go back to the place of its rising? I have at times found it a very illuminating idea.

PHILIP [not indelicately commonplace]. Well, have them in now, Windlesham, while we're waiting.

WINDLESHAM. You might cast your eyes over these new girls, Mr. Philip . . . the very best I could find, I do assure you. Faces are hard enough to get, but figures . . . Well, there! [Reaching the little door, he calls through] Allons Mes'moiselles! Non . . . non . . . par l'autre porte et à la gauche. [Then back again] You get the best effect through a big doorway. [He further explains this by sketching one in the air] One, two and four first.

[He exhibits some costume drawings he has been carrying, distributes one or two, and then vanishes into the other room, from which his voice vibrates]

WINDLESHAM. En avant, s'il vous plaît. Numéro un! Eh bien . . . numéro trois. Non, Ma'moiselle, ce n'est pas commode . . . regardez ce corsage-là . . .

MR. HUXTABLE [making a face]. What I'm always thinking is, why not have a manly chap in charge of the place up here.

MR. STATE [with perfect justice]. Mr. Windlesham may be said to strike a note. Whether it is a right note . . . ?

[Through the big doorway WINDLESHAM ushers in a costume from Paris, the very last word in discreet and costly finery, delicate in colour, fragile in texture; a creation. This is hung upon a young lady of pleasing appearance, pre-occupied with its exhibition, which she achieves by slow and sinuous, never-ceasing movements. She glides into the room. She wears a smile also]

WINDLESHAM. One and two are both Languillière, Mr. Philip. He can't get in the Soupçon Anglais, can he? Won't . . . I tell him. Promenez et sortez, Ma'moiselle.

[The young lady, still smiling and sinuous, begins to circle the room. She seems to be unconscious of its inhabitants,

and they, in return, rather dreadfully pretend not to notice her, but only the costume]

WINDLESHAM. Numéro Deux.

[Another costume, rakishly inclined, with a hat deliberately hideous. The young lady contained in them is again slow and sinuous and vacantly smiling]

WINDLESHAM. But this is chic, isn't it? Promenez.

MR. STATE [in grave enquiry]. What is the Soupçon Anglais?

PHILIP. A Frenchman will tell you that for England you must first make a design and then spoil it.

THOMAS [whose attention has been rivetted]. Don't they speak English?

WINDLESHAM. Oh, pas un mot . . . I mean, not a word. Only came over with me yesterday . . . these three.

THOMAS. Because this frock's a bit thick, y'know.

WINDLESHAM. Numéro Trois!

[A third costume, calculated to have an innocent effect. The accompanying young lady, with a sense of fitness, wears a pout instead of a smile]

PHILIP. What's this?

[His eye is on the surmounting hat of straw]

WINDLESHAM [with a little crow of delight]. That's the new hat. La belle Hélène again!

MR. STATE [interested, still grave]. La belle Hélène. A Parisian firm?

WINDLESHAM [turning this to waggish account]. Well . . . dear me . . . you can almost call her that, can't you? [Suddenly he dashes at the costume and brings it to a standstill] Oh, mon Dieu, Ma'moiselle! La gorgette . . . vous l'avez dérangé.

[He proceeds to arrange la gorgette to his satisfaction, also some other matters which seem to involve a partial evisceration of the underclothing. The young lady, passive, pouts perseveringly. He is quite unconscious of her separate existence. But THOMAS is considerably shocked, and whispers violently to PHILIP]

THOMAS. I say, he shouldn't pull her about like that.

WINDLESHAM [skipping back to admire the result]. Là . . . comme ça.

[The costume continues its round;

the others are still cir-
veering and tacking, while
DLESHAM trips admi-
around and about them
all looks like some dan-
modish dervishes]

PHILIP [heartlessly]. La belle H-
Mr. State, is a well-known P-
cocotte . . . who sets many of
fashions which our wives and daug-
afterwards assume.

MR. HUXTABLE [scandalised].
say that, Phil; it's not nice.

PHILIP. Why?

MR. HUXTABLE. I'm sure no
are aware of it.

PHILIP. But what can be
natural and right than for the
fessional charmer to set the pac-
the amateur!

WINDLESHAM [pausing in the d-
Quite la haute cocotterie, of cours-

MR. STATE [solemnly]. Do you
Mr. Madras, a difference in degree
not in kind?

PHILIP [courteously echoing his
I do.

MR. STATE. That is a very far-
ing observation, sir.

PHILIP. It is.

THOMAS. Do you know the
personally, Mr. Windlesham?

[WINDLESHAM turns, with
tag of a costume in his
thus unconsciously detaini-
occupier]

WINDLESHAM. Oh, no . . . oh
me, no . . . quite the reverse,
assure you. There's nothing gr-
Paris to me. I was blasé long ago.

MR. STATE. But touching that
Mr. Windlesham.

WINDLESHAM. Oh, to be sure.
tendez, mademoiselle.

[Tiptoeing, he dexterously ti-
straw hat from the cla-
head it is perched on]

WINDLESHAM. It's not a bad s-
Sortez.

[By this two costumes have
out. The third follows. S-
who has found it hard to
his eyes off them, gives
thing of a sigh]

MR. STATE. If they'd only just
or wink I might get over the
traordinary feeling it gives me.

[WINDLESHAM, caressing th-
takes up an attitude for his

WINDLESHAM. Well . . . it a-
that a while ago, out at the Pré Cat-

here was Hélène, taking her after-
up of buttermilk. What should
e but Madame Erlancourt . . .
ows enough about that lady, of
. . . in a hat the very twin of
. . . the very twin. Well . . . you
agine! Someone had blundered.
STATE *[absorbed]*. No, I don't

IP. Some spy in the service of
oreign power had procured and
with the plans of the hat.

STATE. Madame What's-her-
night have seen it on her before,
pied it.

IP. Mr. State, Hélène doesn't
hat twice.

STATE. My mistake!

DLESHAM. So there was a terrible

MAS. With madame . . . ?

DLESHAM *[repudiating any such
ty]*. Oh, no. Hélène just let
her chaperon, she being at hand,
peak.

STATE *[dazzled]*. Her what!
[with humorous awe] No, I beg
ardon . . . go on . . . go on.

DLESHAM. She took off her own
. . . pinned it on the head of the
little gamine she could find,
nt the child walking along the
in it. Then she sent to the
as for one of those baskets they
the fish in . . . *[He twirls the
. . . you see. Then she ripped
d of lace off her underskirt
risted it round. Then she took
th her . . . well . . . La Belle
, you know . . . there is some-
in the atmosphere! It was her
she took off . . . blue silk.*

STATE *[Puritan]*. In public?

DLESHAM *[professional]*. Oh, . . .
be done. Hooked them together
stened the bit of lace round the
this way. Très simple! That's
he wore the rest of the afternoon
ck to Paris. This is what's going
he rage.

*[Having deftly pantomimed this
creation of a fashion, he hands
the hat, with an air, to MR.*

STATE, *who examines it.*

PHILIP *[is smilingly caustic]*
IP. La belle Hélène has imagina-
Mr. State. She is also, I am told,
, inclined to religion, a vegetarian,
water her only beverage; in
credit to her profession and ex-
y . . . to ours.

*[MR. STATE hands back the hat,
with the solemnest humour]*

MR. STATE. Mr. Windlesham, I am
much obliged to you for this illuminating
anecdote.

WINDLESHAM. Not at all. . . . Will
you see the other three?

MR. STATE. By all means.

WINDLESHAM. They won't belong in
changing . . . but there's one I must
just pin on.

MR. STATE. No hurry.

*[He has acquired a new joy in
WINDLESHAM, whom he watches
dance away. Then a song is
heard from the next room . . .]*

WINDLESHAM. Allons . . . numéro
cinq . . . numéro sept . . . numéro
dix. Ma'moiselle Ollivier . . . vous
vous mettrez . . .

*[And the door closes. PHILIP
looks at his watch]*

PHILIP. But it's ten past three.
We'd better not wait for my father.

*[They surround the table and sit
down]*

MR. STATE. Major Thomas, have
you my memoranda?

THOMAS. Here.

*[He hands them to STATE, who
clears his throat, refrains from
spitting, and begins the cus-
tomary American oration]*

MR. STATE. The scheme, gentlemen,
for which I desire to purchase the
Madras House and add it to the in-
terest of the Burrows enterprise, which
I already control, is — to put it shortly
— this. The Burrows provincial scheme
— you are aware of its purpose — goes
well enough as far as the shareholding
by the local drapery stores is concerned.
It has been interesting to me to dis-
cover which aspects of the Burrows
scheme suit which cities . . . and why.
An absorbing problem in the psychology
of local conditions! Now, we have
eliminated from the mass a consider-
able number of cases where the local
people will not join with us. And in your
Leicesters and Norwiches and Plymouths
and Coventrys . . . there the unknown
name, the uninspiring name of Burrows,
upon a fire-new establishment next door
might anyhow be ineffective. But be-
yond that I have a reason . . . and I
hope a not uninteresting reason, to put
before you gentlemen . . . why it is in
these provincial centres that we should
look to establish our Madras Houses . . .
New Edition. Is that clear so far?

[During this MR. CONSTANTINE MADRAS has arrived. He turned aside for a moment to the door that the models came from, now he joins the group. A man of sixty, to whom sixty is the prime of life. Tall, quite dramatically dignified, suave, a little remote; he is one of those to whom life is an art of which they have determined to be master. It is a handsome face, Eastern in type, the long beard only streaked with grey. He does not dress like the ruck of men, because he is not of them. The velvet coat, brick-red tie, shepherd's-plaid trousers, white spats and patent boots, both suit him and express him subtly and well—the mixture of sensuous originality and tradition which is the man. PHILIP is purposely casual in greeting him; he has sighted him first. But MR. STATE gets up, impressed. It is part of his creed to recognise greatness; he insists on recognising it]

PHILIP. Hullo, Father!

MR. STATE. Mr. Madras! Proud to meet you again.

CONSTANTINE [graciously, without emotion]. How do you do, Mr. State.

PHILIP. You know everyone, Father. Oh . . . Hippisly Thomas.

CONSTANTINE [just as graciously]. How do you do, sir. [Then, with a mischievous smile, he pats HUXTABLE on the shoulder] How are you, my dear Harry?

[MR. HUXTABLE had heard him coming, and felt himself turn purple. This was the great meeting after thirty years! He had let it come upon him unawares; purposely let it, for indeed he had not known what to say or do. He had dreaded having the inspiration to say or do anything. Now, alas, and thank goodness! it is too late. He is at a suitable disadvantage. He need only grunt out sulkily . . .]

MR. HUXTABLE. I'm quite well, thank you.

[CONSTANTINE, with one more pat in pardon for the rudeness, goes to his chair]

MR. STATE. A pleasant trip on the Continent?

CONSTANTINE. Instructive. Don't let me interrupt business. I shall pick up the thread.

MR. STATE [serving up a little warmed oration]. I was just proceeding to place on the table-cloth some preliminary details of the scheme has been elaborating since our meeting in June last to consolidate your power and fame in some of the most important cities of England. We had not got far.

[He consults his notes. CONSTANTINE produces from his pocket a slender cigarette holder of amber]

CONSTANTINE. You've some models, Phil.

PHILIP. Yes.

CONSTANTINE. The tall girl well enough. May I smoke?

MR. STATE. Allow me.

[Whipping out his cigarette]

CONSTANTINE. A cigarette, you, of my own.

[He proceeds to make and light one. MR. STATE offers him a cigarette, and then places it in his own hand]

MR. STATE. I occasionally get some pleasure from a cold cigarette, but it was not for the moment entering the finance of the matter because I entertain no doubt that . . . possibly with a little adjustment of the price of shares and cash . . . that the matter will be fixed.

MR. HUXTABLE [in emulation of this ease and grace]. I'll have a cigarette, Phil . . . if you've got one.

[PHILIP has one. And ever since he has made himself comfortable, MR. STATE continues to smoke calmly . . .]

MR. STATE. And I suspect that you are no more interested in money than I am, Mr. Madras. Anyone can get money, if he has capital enough. I have a little that I have come from lumber and canned peaches. Now, there is poetry in lumber. The virgin forest . . . I'd go sit in it for weeks at a time. There was poetry in peaches before they were canned. Do you wonder why I bought that mantle establishment in the city?

PHILIP [who is only sorry that time he must stop]. Why, Mr. State?

MR. STATE. Because, Mr. Philip, I found myself a lonely man. I felt the need of getting into touch with the world. Goethe refers to it as the woman . . . drawing us ever upward and outward. That opportunity occurred, and

l a businesslike way of doing
ick.

STANTINE [*through a little cloud*
ke]. And satisfying?

STATE. I beg your pardon?

STANTINE. Has the ready-made
business satisfied your craving for
ernal feminine?

STATE. Mr. Madras . . . that
m is deserved . . . No, sir, it
ot. The Burrows business, I
er, lacks all inner meaning . . .
no soul. A business can no more
without a soul than a human
can. I'm sure I have you with
ere, Mr. Huxtable.

[*Poor Mr. HUXTABLE quite chokes*
at the suddenness of this sum-
mons, but shines his best]

HUXTABLE. I should say so,

[*MR. STATE begins to glow*]

STATE. There was fun, mind
. . . there still is . . . in making
provincial milliners hop . . . put-
pistol to their heads . . . saying
ur Goods or be Froze Out. That
me lively and it wakes them up
oes them good. But Burrows
the Movement. The Woman's
ent. The Great Modern Wo-
Movement. It has come home
that the man, who has as much
with Woman as manufacturing
nes of her corsets and yet is not
usly in that Movement is Out-
istory. Shovelling goods over a
r and adding up profits . . .
no excuse for cumbering the
. . . nothing personal, Mr. Hux-

[*MR. HUXTABLE is ready this*
time]

HUXTABLE. No, no . . . I'm
ag to you. I'm not too old to

STATE. Mind, I don't say I
t taken pleasure in Burrows.
had Notions . . . caused two
to spring where one sprung
There was Nottingham.

HUXTABLE. I know Notting-
. . . got a shop there?

STATE [*with wholesome pride*].
years the Burrows establishment
ttingham has smashed competi-
I've not visited the city myself.
otion was our local manager's.
e. The Ladies' department served
tlemen . . . the Gentlemen's by
Always, of course, within the

bounds of delicacy. Do you think there
is nothing in that, Mr. Huxtable?

MR. HUXTABLE [*round-eyed and open-*
mouthed]. Oh . . . well . . .

MR. STATE. But are you the Mean
Sensual Man?

MR. HUXTABLE [*whose knowledge of*
the French language hardly assists him
to this startling translation]. No . . .
I hope not.

MR. STATE. Put yourself in his
place. Surrounded by pretty girls . . .
good girls, mind you . . . high class.
Pay them well . . . let them live out
. . . pay for their mothers and cha-
perons, if necessary. Well . . . Sur-
rounded by Gracious Womanhood, does
the Sensual Man forget how much
money he is spending or does he not?
Does he come again? Is it a little
Oasis in the desert of his business day?
Is it a better attraction than Alcohol,
or is it not?

PHILIP [*bitingly*]. Is it?

MR. STATE. Then, sir . . . Audi
Alteram Partem. I should like you
to see our Ladies' Fancy Department
at its best . . . just before the football
season.

PHILIP. I think I do!

MR. STATE. Athletes everyone of
em . . . not a man under six foot . . .
bronzed, noble fellows! And no flirting
allowed . . . no making eyes . . . no
pandering to anything Depraved. Just
the Ordinary Courtesies of our Modern
Civilisation from Pure, Clean-minded
Gentlemen towards any of the Fair
Sex who step in to buy a shilling sachet
or the like. And pay, sir . . . The
women come in flocks!

MR. HUXTABLE [*bereft of breath*]. Is
this how you mean to run your new
Madras Houses?

MR. STATE. Patience, Mr. Huxtable.
It's but six months ago that I started
to study the Woman Question from the
point of view of Burrows and Co. I
attended women's meetings in London,
in Manchester, and in one-horse places
as well. Now, Political claims were
but the narrowest, drabbest aspect of
the matter as I saw it. The Woman's
Movement is Woman expressing herself.
Let us look at things as they are.
What are a Woman's chief means . . .
how often her only means of expressing
herself? Anyway . . . what is the first
thing that she spends her money on?
Clothes, gentlemen, clothes. Therefore,
I say . . . though at Cannon Street we

may palp with good ideas . . . the ready-made skirt is out of date . . .

[WINDLESHAM, pins in his mouth, fashion plates under his arm, and the fish-basket hat in his hand, shoots out of the other room]

WINDLESHAM. Will you have the others in now? [Then back through the door] Allons, Mesdemoiselles, si vous plaît. Numéro cinq le premier. [Then he turns the hat upside down on the table] I thought you'd like to see that they've actually left the handles on. But I don't think we can do that here, do you?

[There comes in as before the most elaborate evening gown that ever was]

WINDLESHAM [as he searches for the design]. Numéro cinq . . . number five.

[THOMAS is much struck]

THOMAS. I say . . . by Jove!

[But the cold, searching light seems to separate from the glittering pink affair the poor, pretty, smiling creature exhibiting it, until, indeed, she seems half naked. MR. WINDLESHAM'S æsthetic sense is outraged]

WINDLESHAM. Mais non, mais non . . . pas en plein jour. Mettez-vous par là dans le . . . dans l'alcove . . . à côté du velours noir.

[The costume undulates towards the black velvet platform. THOMAS is lost in admiration]

THOMAS. That gives her a chance, doesn't it? Damn pretty girl!

PHILIP [his eye twinkling]. She'll understand that, Tommy.

THOMAS [in good faith]. She won't mind.

MR. STATE [who has been studying the undulations]. How they learn to walk like it . . . that's what beats me!

[MR. WINDLESHAM turns on the frame of lights which bear upon the velvet platform. The vision of female loveliness is now complete]

WINDLESHAM. There . . . that's the coup d'œil.

[The vision turns this way and that to show what curves of loveliness there may be. They watch, all but CONSTANTINE, who has sat silent and indifferent, rolling his second cigarette, which he now smokes serenely.

At last PHILIP'S voice in, at its coolest, its most

PHILIP. And are we to assume State, that this piece of self-deceit really expresses the nature of woman? Rather an awful thought.

THOMAS [in protest]. Why?

PHILIP. Or if it expresses an opinion of her . . . that's rather

THOMAS. It's damned smart. it, Mr. Huxtable?

MR. HUXTABLE [who is examining closely]. No use to us, of course couldn't imitate that under guineas. Look at the . . . what call it?

WINDLESHAM [loving the very Diamanté.

THOMAS [with discretion]. Ju England, of course, you might the shiny stuff marking a bit definitely where the pink silk and she begins.

MR. HUXTABLE [not to be seen]. But it's a beautiful thing.

MR. STATE [sweepingly]. Fitting to adorn the presiding genius of intellectual and artistic salon. artistic than intellectual, perhaps more likely to be the centre of Era than Thought!

WINDLESHAM. I could almost you who we shall sell that to. . . Mrs. . . . dear me . . . you know the name. Assez, Ma'm . . . sortez.

[He turns off the light. vision becomes once more ridiculously expensive with a rather thin and young person half-dressed, it, who is thus unceremoniously got rid of]

WINDLESHAM. Numéro sept.

[Another costume]

MR. STATE. Now here again. velvet. Is it velvet?

WINDLESHAM. Panné velvet. menez, s'il vous plaît.

MR. STATE. And ermine.

MR. HUXTABLE. Good Lord more buttons!

MR. STATE. The very thing doubt, in which some peeress take the chair at a drawing meeting.

PHILIP [as he eyes the buttons of ermine]. Either of the Humanitarian or of the Anti-Sweating League

ld dream of taking
without . . .
[*in reproof*]. Sar-
Mr. Philo-
[*each sweetness*]. I
beg for pardon.
[*micro dix*].

[*A and costume*]

Mr. Wind about this?
STATE. Grey with a touch of
severe soft. An Anti-suf-
Platform.
[*up to with him*]. No . . .
[*square the neck*]. Suffrage,
[*State rubbing his hands*].
There purpose in this per-
Major Thomas. Woman al-
is along many paths. Be it ours
end her doing what service we

STANTINE. You are a poet, Mr.

STATE. never wrote one in
2, sir.

STANTINE. How many poets
cease scribbling and try to
a perfect pic as seems likely
his purpose of yours of the
s House.

STATE [*with gratified*]. I shall
be our successor. [*Then*
[*But* is the Middle Class
n of England that is waiting for
The woman who still sits at the
r window of her Provincial Villa,
ely gazing through the Laurel
s. have seen her on my Soli-
walks. She must have her chance
z and Chamber. That is every
s birth at . . . be she a
ess in Mayor or a doctor's wife
e suburbs of Leicester. And re-
er, gentlemen, that the Middle
Women of England . . . think
m in bulk . . . they form one of
eatest More Spending Machines
orld has ever seen.

FLUXTABLE [*with a wag of the*
[*he's more his ease now*]. Yes
their husbands' money.

STATE [*taking a long breath and*
[*tone*]. At our most advanced
ers are sure that the economic
ndence of women is the next
n the . . .

FLUXTABLE [*overwhelmed*]. Oh

STATE [*1800, now more than*

ever]. And now that the Seed of
Freedom is sown in their Sweet Natures
. . . what Mighty Forest . . . what a
Luxuriant, Tropical, Scented growth of
Womanhood may not spring up around
us. For we live in an Ugly World.
Look at my tie! Consider your vest,
Major Thomas! [*His eye searches for*
[*those costumes, and finds one*] This is
all the Living Beauty that there is.
We want more of it. I want to see
that Poor Provincial Lady burst through
the laurel bushes and dash down the
road . . . Clad in Colours of the
Rainbow.

[WINDLESHAM has indeed detained
the severely soft costume and
its young lady, and there she
has stood for a while, still
smiling, but wondering, perhaps,
behind the smile, into what
peculiar company of milliners
she has fallen. THOMAS, sud-
denly noticing that she is stand-
ing there, with the utmost
politeness jumps up to hand
his chair]

THOMAS. I say, though . . . allow
me.

WINDLESHAM. Thank you . . . but
she can't. Not in that corset.

MR. STATE. Dear me, I had not
meant to detain Mademoiselle. [*Then*
[*to amend his manners, and rather as if it*
[*were an incantation warranted to achieve*
[*his purpose*] Bon jour.

[*The young lady departs, a real*
[*smile quite shaming the unreal*]

MR. STATE. You clean forget they're
there. We gave some time and money
to elaborating a mechanical moving
figure to take the place of . . . a real
automaton, in fact. But sometimes it
stuck and sometimes it ran away . . .

THOMAS. And the cost!

PHILIP [*finely*]. Flesh and blood is
always cheaper.

MR. STATE. You approve of corsets,
Mr. Windlesham?

WINDLESHAM. Oh, yes . . . the fig-
ure is the woman, as we say.

MR. STATE. Have you ever gone
deeply into the Psychology of the ques-
tion? A while ago I had a smart young
Historian write Burrows a little Mono-
graph on Corsets . . . price one shilling.
Conservative, summing up in their
favour. And we made up a little
Museum of them . . . at Southampton,
I think . . . but that was not a suc-
cess. Major Thomas . . . we must

send Mr. Windlesham a copy of that Monograph. You will find it very interesting.

WINDLESHAM. I'm sure I shall. Can I do any more for you?

PHILIP. See me before I go, will you?

WINDLESHAM. Then it's au'voir.

[And he flutters away. There is a pause as if they had to recollect where they were. It is broken by PHILIP saying, meditatively]

PHILIP. I sometimes wonder if we realise what women's clothes are like . . . or our own, for that matter.

MR. HUXTABLE. What's that?

PHILIP. Have you ever tried to describe a costume as it would appear to a strange eye? Can you think of this last? A hat as little like a hat as anything on a creature's head may be. Lace. Flowers of a colour it never pleases God to grow them. And a jewelled feather . . . a feather with stones in it. The rest might be called a conspiracy in three colours on the part of a dozen sewing women to persuade you that the creature they have clothed can neither walk, digest her food, nor bear children. Now . . . can that be beautiful?

MR. STATE [to whom this is the real conversational thing]. Mr. Philip, that notion is a lever thrust beneath the very foundations of Society.

MR. HUXTABLE [showing off a little]. Oh . . . trying to upset people's ideas for the sake of doing it . . . silly.

THOMAS [with solid sense]. I think a crowd of well-dressed women is one of the most beautiful things in the world.

PHILIP. Have you ever seen an Eastern woman walk into a Bond Street tea shop?

THOMAS. No.

PHILIP [forcefully]. I have.

CONSTANTINE. Ah!

[With one long, meditative exhalation he sends a little column of smoke into the air. MR. STATE turns to him deferentially]

MR. STATE. We are boring you, Mr. Madras, I'm afraid. You were Facile Princes upon all these questions so long ago.

[CONSTANTINE speaks in the smoothest of voices]

CONSTANTINE. No, I am not bored, Mr. State . . . only a little horrified.

MR. STATE. Why so?

CONSTANTINE. You see . . . I am a

Mahommedan . . . and this attitude towards the other sex has become loathsome to me.

[This bombshell, so delicately exploded, affects the company variously. It will be some time before MR. HUXTABLE grasps its meaning at all. THOMAS simply opens his mouth. MR. STATE has evidently found joy in life. PHILIP, too, it seems no news, merely a protest in light protest . . .]

PHILIP. My dear Father!

MR. STATE [as he beams round at the real Mahommedan?]

CONSTANTINE. I have become Mahommedan. If you were not, it would be inconvenient to live permanently at Hit . . . a village upon the borders of Southern Arabia . . . is my home. Besides, I was converted.

THOMAS [having recovered his breath]. I didn't know you could come a Mahommedan.

CONSTANTINE [with some severity]. You can become a Christian, sir.

THOMAS [a little shocked]. Alas, no, not quite the same sort of thing.

MR. STATE [who feels that he is re-discovering the old world]. But very interesting! To a broad-minded man . . . how extraordinarily interesting! Was it a sudden conversion?

CONSTANTINE. No . . . I had been searching for a religion . . . a conversion needed in these times . . . and this was a very fine one, Mr. State.

MR. STATE. Is it? I must look it up. The Koran! Yes, I've never read the Koran . . . an oversight.

[He makes a mental note. He looks slowly, slowly, the full impact of it has sunk into MR. HUXTABLE. His face has changed from red to white and back again to red. He becomes more articulate and vehement. He thumps the table]

MR. HUXTABLE. And what about Amelia?

MR. STATE [with conciliatory tones]. Who is Amelia?

PHILIP. Afterwards, Uncle.

MR. HUXTABLE [thumping the table]. What about your wife? No, I must be quiet, Phil! It's illegal.

CONSTANTINE [with a half-cold, kindly eye on him]. Harry . . . I like to see you make yourself ridiculous. [Only this was not

HUXTABLE. Who cares if I'm us? I've not spoken to you for years . . . have I? That is ve not taken more notice of you could help. And I come here full of forgiveness . . . and y . . . to see what you're really w . . . and whether I've changed d . . . or whether I never really that about you at all . . . and d if you don't go and put up a game on me! What about ? Religion this time! Madan, indeed . . . at your age! you ever settle down? I beg pardon, Mr. State. All right, afterwards! I've not done . . . I're quite right . . . afterwards. *The gust over, Mr. STATE, who is a little be-blown by it at such close quarters, says, partly with a peace-making intention, partly in curiosity . . .* STATE. But do you indulge in a

MR. HUXTABLE *is on his feet, righteously strepitant*

HUXTABLE. If you insult my y answering that question . . . *With a look and a gesture CONSTANTINE can silence him. Then with the coldest dignity he replies . . .*

ANTINE. My household, sir, of the ordinary Eastern gentleman's position. We do not speak women in public.

STATE. I'm sure I beg your

ANTINE. Not at all. It is ars since I definitely retired from s and decided to consummate ection for the East by settling here. This final visit to Europe rtly to see you, Mr. State . . . ewise only to confirm my judgment the question.

STATE. Has it?

ANTINE. It has. I was always lace amongst you. I was some-empted to regret my scandalous t . . . *[A slight stir from Mr. ale]* Hush, Harry . . . hush! never could persuade myself to it. It is some slight personal ion to me to discover . . . stranger's eye . . . that Europe titude towards women is mad.

STATE. Mad!

ANTINE. Mad.

AS *[who is all ears]*. I say!

CONSTANTINE. You possibly agree with me, Major Thomas.

THOMAS *[much taken aback]*. No . . . I don't think so.

CONSTANTINE. Many men do, but — poor fellows — they dare not say so. For instance, Mr. State, what can be said of a community in which five men of some ability and dignity are met together to traffic in . . . what was the Numéro of that aphrodisiac that so particularly attracted Major Thomas?

[THOMAS is shocked even to violence]

THOMAS. No . . . really. I protest —

MR. STATE *[utterly calm]*. Easy, Major Thomas. Let us consider the accusation philosophically. *[Then with the sweetest smile]* Surely that is a gross construction to put on the instinct of every beautiful woman to adorn herself.

CONSTANTINE. Why gross? I delight in pretty women, prettily adorned. To come home after a day's work to the welcome of one's women folk . . . to find them unharassed by notions of business or politics . . . ready to refresh one's spirit by attuning it to the gentler, sweeter side of life . . .

THOMAS *[making hearty atonement]*. Oh! Quite so . . . quite so.

CONSTANTINE. I thought you would agree with me, Major Thomas. That is the Mahommedan gentleman's domestic ideal.

THOMAS *[brought up short]*. Is it?

CONSTANTINE. But you don't expect to find your wife dressed like that . . . the diamanté and the . . .

THOMAS *[mental discomfort growing on him]*. No . . . that was a going out dress.

PHILIP *[greatly enjoying this contest]*. Oh . . . Tommy! Tommy!

THOMAS *[in tortuosity of mind — and conscience]*. But I tell you if my wife would . . . that is, if any chap's wife will . . . I mean . . . *[Then he gets it out]* If a woman always kept herself smart and attractive at home then a man would have no excuse for gadding about after other women.

[MR. HUXTABLE joins the fray, suddenly, snappily]

MR. HUXTABLE. She sits looking after his children . . . what more does he want of her?

CONSTANTINE. Harry is a born husband, Major Thomas.

MR. HUXTABLE. I'm not a born libertine, I hope.

THOMAS. Libertine be damned.

MR. STATE [*pacifically*]. Gentlemen, gentlemen . . . these are abstract propositions.

MR. HUXTABLE. Gadding after another man's wife, perhaps! Though I don't think you ever did that, Constantine . . . I'll do you justice . . . I don't think you ever did.

CONSTANTINE. I never did.

PHILIP [*with intense mischief*]. Oh, Tommy, Tommy . . . can you say the same?

[THOMAS is really flabbergasted at the indecency]

THOMAS. Phil, that ain't nice . . . that ain't gentlemanly. And I wasn't thinking of that, and you know I wasn't. And . . . we ain't all so unattractive to women as you are.

[MR. STATE loses himself in enjoyment of this repartee]

MR. STATE. Ah . . . Sour Grapes, Mr. Philip. We mustn't be personal . . . but is it Sour Grapes?

PHILIP [*very coolly on his defence*]. Thank you, Tommy . . . I can attract just the sort of woman I want to attract. But as long as it's Numero Cinq, Six or Sept that attracts you . . . well . . . so long will Madras Houses be an excellent investment for Mr. State.

[That is the end of that little breeze, and CONSTANTINE's voice completes the quieting]

CONSTANTINE. Phil is a cold-blooded egotist, and if women like him that is their misfortune. I know his way with a woman . . . coax her on to the intellectual plane, where he thinks he can better her. You have my sympathy, Major Thomas. I also am as susceptible as Nature means a man to be . . . as all women must wish him to be. And I referred to these going out dresses because — candidly — I found myself obliged to leave a country where women are let loose with money to spend and time to waste. Encouraged to flaunt their charms on the very streets . . . proud, if they see the busmen wink . . .

MR. HUXTABLE. Not busmen.

[He is only gently deprecating now]

CONSTANTINE. Proud, my dear Harry, if they see a cabman smile.

[MR. HUXTABLE looks around, and then nods solemnly and thoughtfully]

MR. HUXTABLE. Yes, it's true deny it any other time, but I've thinking a bit lately . . . and things you think of once you stop think! And it's true. [*But with chivalry*] Only they don't know do it. They don't know they [*Then a doubt occurring*] D'you they know they do it, Phil?

PHILIP. Some of them sure Uncle.

MR. HUXTABLE [*his faith unshaken*]. No, what I say is it's Instinct and we've just got to be as nice-nice about it as we can. There was this summer at Weymouth . . . one of my daughters. Bought a dress . . . not one of the N sort, of course . . . but very . . . orange colour, it was . . . s But you could see it a mile off parade . . . and her sisters all their noses out of joint. I saw myself . . . Instinct . . .

[Suddenly MR. STATE rescues the discussion]

MR. STATE. Yes, sir . . . noblest Instinct of all . . . the Instinct to Perpetuate our Race. Let us High Ground in this matter, gentlemen.

CONSTANTINE [*unstirred*]. The highest, Mr. State. If you think to turn Weymouth for a month into a cockpit of haphazard love-making with all the consequences that entails, is the best way of perpetuating your race . . . well, I disagree with you . . . but it's a point of view. What I ask is why Major Thomas and myself . . . already perhaps in a creditable state of marital perfection . . . should have our busy lives obsessed by . . . What is this thing?

PHILIP. La belle Hélène's new dress, Father.

CONSTANTINE. Now, that makes it ugly . . . I hope I never made anything quite so ugly myself . . . but it's attractive.

PHILIP [*with a wry face*]. No, I don't.

CONSTANTINE. Isn't it, Tommy?

THOMAS. [*honestly*]. Well, it makes you look at em when you see them, not otherwise.

CONSTANTINE. Yes . . . it's a vocative. Its intention is that of the world's work shall be done it's about. And when it's always I honestly confess again that I

share. It's a terrible thing to constantly conscious of women. We give their uses to the world . . . so happily phrased it, Mr. . . . their perpetual use . . . and d's interest is best served by them strictly to it. Are these five ladies [*he fingers the hat remarkable for perpetuation* says?

Once more Mr. STATE bursts in — *this time almost heart-brokenly*

STATE. I can't bear this, sir. I can't bear to take such a view . . . no man of feeling could. It's Reactionary . . . you're wrong tack. You must come us, sir. You gave us Joy and . . . can we do without them? You find yourself once more the Loveliness you helped us ship, you'll change your mind. As the end of that little story Duchess? How, on the ap-night, attired in her Madras, she swept into the Ball room frou-frou of silk skirt wafting as she came . . . while her rivals Pale before the Influence of her Beauty, and every the room . . . young and old struggles for a Glimpse . . . a . . . a Look. [*Once again he soars*] A Ball room, sir . . . one of the Sweetest Sights in the world? When bright the lamps rise for Fair Women and Brave Men. It rises with its Voluptuous Swell. It looks Love to eyes which speak. And all goes Merry as a Marcell! Byron, gentlemen, taught my mother's knee. The poet of Liberty . . . read in every America.

At the end of this recitation, which Mr. HUXTABLE barely refrains from applauding, CONSTANTINE goes coolly on

CONSTANTINE. Mr. State, that is the whole of our upper world, which everyone with a say in the government of the country tries to . . . is now run as a ball room. Men swaggering before women. Women ogling the men. Once not some training in manliness. Now from the very start . . . ! Our own progressive country . . . education . . . oh, my dear sir, mixed education!

MR. STATE. A softening influence. CONSTANTINE [*unexpectedly*]. Of course it is. And what has it sunk to, moreover . . . all education now-a-days? Book-learning. Because woman's a dab at that . . . though it's of quite secondary importance to a man.

THOMAS [*feelingly*]. That's so.

CONSTANTINE. And moral influence. Woman's morality . . . the worst in the world.

PHILIP. Slave morality.

CONSTANTINE. Yes. Read Nietzsche . . . as my friend Tarleton says. [*All one gathers from this cryptic allusion is that Mr. HUXTABLE, at any rate, reprobrates Tarleton, and, inferentially, Nietzsche*] At Oxford and Cambridge it grows worse . . . married professors . . . Newnham and Girton . . . suffrage questions . . . purity questions.

MR. HUXTABLE. Of course, some of the novels . . .

CONSTANTINE. From seventeen to thirty-four . . . the years which a man should consecrate to the acquiring of political virtue . . . wherever he turns he is distracted, provoked, tantalised by the barefaced presence of women. How's he to keep a clear brain for the larger issues of life? Why do you soldiers, Major Thomas, volunteer with such alacrity for foreign service?

THOMAS [*with a jump*]. Good God . . . I never thought of that.

CONSTANTINE. What's the result? Every great public question . . . all politics, all religion, all economy is being brought down to the level of women's emotion. Admirable in its way, . . . charming in its place! But softening, sentimentalising, enervating . . . lapping the world, if you let it, in the nursery cotton wool of prettiness and pettiness. Men don't realise how far rotted by the process they are . . . that's what's so fatal. We're used to a whole nation's anger being vented in scoldings . . . or rather we're getting used to the thought that it's naughty to be angry at all. Justice degenerates into kindness . . . that doesn't surprise us. Religion is a pretty hymn tune to keep us from fear of the dark. You four unfortunates might own the truth just for once . . . you needn't tell your wives.

MR. STATE. I am not married.

CONSTANTINE. I might have known it.

MR. STATE [*a little astonished*]. But no matter.

CONSTANTINE [*with full appreciation of what he says*]. Women haven't morals or intellect in our sense of the words. They have other incompatible qualities quite as important, no doubt. But shut them away from public life and public exhibition. It's degrading to compete with them . . . it's as degrading to compete for them. Perhaps we're too late already . . . but oh, my dear sentimental Sir [*he addresses the pained though admiring MR. STATE*], if we could replant the laurel bushes thick enough we might yet rediscover the fine manly world we are losing.

[*Except PHILIP, who sits detached and attentive, they are all rather depressed by this judgment upon them. THOMAS recovers sufficiently to ask . . .*]

THOMAS. Are you advocating polygamy in England?

CONSTANTINE. That is what it should come to.

THOMAS. Well . . . I call that rather shocking. [*Then with some hopeful interest*] And is it practical?

CONSTANTINE. I did not anticipate the reform in my lifetime . . . so I left for the East.

PHILIP [*finely*]. You did quite right, Father. I wish everyone of your way of thinking would do the same.

[*CONSTANTINE is ready for him*]

CONSTANTINE. Are you prepared for so much depopulation? Think of the women who'd be off to-morrow.

[*MR. HUXTABLE wakes from stupefaction to say with tremendous emphasis*]

MR. HUXTABLE. Never!

CONSTANTINE. Wrong, Harry.

MR. HUXTABLE. No, I'm not wrong just because you say so! You ought to listen to me a bit sometimes. I always listened to you.

CONSTANTINE. Bless your quick temper.

[*Who could resist CONSTANTINE's smile . . . Well, not HUXTABLE*]

MR. HUXTABLE. Oh . . . go on . . . tell me why I'm wrong . . . I daresay I am.

CONSTANTINE. Even if you have liked bringing up six daughters and not getting them married . . . how have they liked it? You should have drowned them at birth, Harry . . .

MR. HUXTABLE. You must enjoy your joke, mustn't you?

CONSTANTINE. Therefore, how pleasanter for you . . . how better for them . . . if you'd but find one man ready, for a small consideration, to marry the lot.

MR. HUXTABLE [*with intense vehemence*]. Now if I was to tell my wife that I wouldn't see the umour of it.

CONSTANTINE. The woman entered your last ditch, Mr. State, I trust that women will side with you. Don't make any mistake. This is a serious question to them . . . of life and happiness . . . and sometimes bread and butter. Quite apart from our customers here . . . kept by every one of them . . .

MR. STATE [*in some alarm*]. don't say!

CONSTANTINE [*gently lifting him from the little trap*]. Economically.

by their husbands . . . or if they are on their dividends, kept by Society.

PHILIP. What about men who are on their dividends?

MR. STATE. No . . . now don't let us go on to politics.

CONSTANTINE. . . . And apart from the prisoners in that chaste little fort on Denmark Hill . . . we use them to employ, Harry, between us and what? . . . two or three hundred and independent women . . . men in clothes for the others, the ladies. They are as free as you like to go . . . free to starve. How much do they rejoice in their freedom to earn their living by ruining their health and stifling their instincts? Answer me, Harry, you monstrous good-natured wickedness.

MR. HUXTABLE. What's that?

CONSTANTINE. You keep an infernal seraglio.

MR. HUXTABLE. A what?

CONSTANTINE. What else is it but Roberts and Huxtable but a hard industry? Do you know that it is sickened with horror a good Mahomedan? You buy these girls in the market . . . you keep them under and key . . .

MR. HUXTABLE. I do?

CONSTANTINE. Quite right, Harry, no harm done. [*Then his voice rises to the utmost seriousness*] But you are getting your profits out of them by putting them on exhibition for ten hours a day. Their good looks, their good man-

womanhood. Hired out it is to stranger to hold as cheap for a few es as common decency allows. when you've worn them out you them out . . . forget their very . . . wouldn't know their faces i met them selling matches at door. For such treatment of tial motherhood, my Prophet cons a man to Hell.

HUXTABLE *[breathless with amaze- Well, I never did in all my days! They can marry respect- can't they? We like em to*

LIP. Yes, Uncle . . . I went into question with Miss Yates and the locks this morning.

CONSTANTINE *[completing his case]. you all . . . what is to happen a as a nation? Where are your generations coming from? What the well-kept women you flatter stheticise till they won't give you en, and the free women you work rket rates till they can't give you en . . .*

HUXTABLE *[half-humorously Miss Yates has obliged us, w.*

LIP *[quickly capping him]. And going to dismiss her.*

[MR. HUXTABLE flashes again into protestation]

HUXTABLE. What else can we But I said you weren't to be on the girl. And I won't be upset his. I want to take things as I m . . . that is as I used to find . . . before there was any of these going around . . . and I'm sure re happier without em. Stifling instincts . . . it's a horrid way lk. And I don't believe it. I send for every girl in the shop, ot one of em would hint at it to [He has triumphed with himself r, but his new-born intellectual ence brings him down] Not that proves anything, does it? I'm a It's a beastly world. But I make it so, do I?

LIP. Who does?

HUXTABLE. Other people. r's eye is on him] Oh, I see it g. You're going to say we're other people or something. I'm g up to you.

CONSTANTINE *[very carefully]. What about a Miss Yates?*

LIP. A little bother down at

Peckham. I can tell you afterwards if you like.

CONSTANTINE. No . . . there is no need.

[Something in the tone of this last makes PHILIP look up quickly. But MR. STATE, with a sudden thought, has first dived for his watch, and then, at the sight of it, gets up from the table]

MR. STATE. Gentlemen, are you aware of the time? I may mention that I have a City appointment at four o'clock.

CONSTANTINE *[polite, but leisurely]. Are we detaining you, Mr. State? Not universal or compulsory polygamy, Major Thomas. That would be nonsense. The very distribution of the sexes forbids it. But its recognition is one of the logical outcomes of the aristocratic method of government. And that's the only ultimate method . . . all others are interim plans for sifting out various aristocracies. The community of the future will specialise its functions. Women will find, I hope, some intellectual companions like my son, who will, besides, take a gentle interest in the County Council. There will be single-hearted men like Harry, content with old-fashioned domesticity. There will be poets like you, Mr. State, to dream about women and to dress them . . . their bodies in silks and their virtues in phrases. But there must also be such men as Major Thomas and myself . . .*

[THOMAS rises, yet again, to this piece of chaff]

THOMAS. No, no! I'm not like that . . . not in the least. Because a fellow has been in the Army! Don't drag me in.

MR. STATE. As stimulating a conversation as I remember. A little hard to follow at times . . . but worth far more than the sacrifice of any mere business doings.

[CONSTANTINE takes the hint graciously, and is apt for business at once]

CONSTANTINE. My fault! Shall we agree, Mr. State, to accept as much of your offer as you have no intention of altering? We are dealing for both the shops?

MR. STATE. Yes. What are we proposing to knock off their valuation, Major Thomas?

THOMAS. Eight thousand six hundred.

CONSTANTINE. Phil, what were we prepared to come down?

PHILIP. Nine thousand.

CONSTANTINE. A very creditable margin. Your offer is accepted, Mr. State.

[Mr. STATE feels he must really play up to such magnificent conducting of business]

MR. STATE. I should prefer to knock you down only eight thousand.

CONSTANTINE [keeping the advantage]. Isn't that merely romantic of you, Mr. State . . . not in the best form of business art?

THOMAS. But the conditions, you know?

CONSTANTINE. We accept your conditions. If they won't work you'll be only anxious to alter them. So the business is done.

[Mr. HUXTABLE's eyes are wide]

MR. HUXTABLE. But look here.

PHILIP. Uncle Harry has something to say . . .

MR. HUXTABLE [assertively]. Yes.

CONSTANTINE. Something different to say, Harry?

MR. HUXTABLE [after thinking it over]. No.

[So CONSTANTINE returns happily to his subject]

CONSTANTINE. What interests me about this Woman Question . . . now that I've settled my personal share in it . . . is to wonder how Europe, hampered by such an unsolved problem, can hope to stand up against the Oriental revival.

THOMAS. What's that?

CONSTANTINE. You'll hear of it shortly. Up from the Persian gulf to where I live we could grow enough wheat to feed the British Empire. Life there is simple and spacious . . . the air is not breathed out. All we want is a happy, hardy race of men, and under a decent government we shall soon beget it. But you Europeans! Is this the symbol you are marching to the future under? [He has found again, and lifts up, la Belle Hélène's new hat] A cap of slavery! You are all idolaters of women . . . and they are the slaves of your idolatry.

MR. STATE [with undisguised admiration]. Mr. Madras, I am proud to have met you again. If I say another word, I may be so interested in your reply that I shall miss my appointment. My coat? Thank you, Mr.

Philip. I have to meet a man a new system of country house draught that he wants me to finance. hardly hope for another Transcendental Discussion upon that.

CONSTANTINE. Why not?

MR. STATE. If you were he! bye, sir. Good-day, Mr. Huxtable. Till to-morrow, Major Thomas. Mr. Philip, don't see me down.

[He is off for his next
PHILIP civilly takes him
the door, saying . . .]

PHILIP. Your car's at the Street entrance, I expect.

[And then he comes back.]

CONSTANTINE is keeping his friendly eye on HUXTABLE's fidgets under it. THOMAS breathes and expounds a gri-

THOMAS. That's how he settles business. But leaves us all the paper to do. I shall take mine home. Thirty gets me indoors by a quarter of six. Time for a cup of tea! have you got China tea?

PHILIP. Downstairs.

MR. HUXTABLE. I must be going back, I think.

CONSTANTINE. Harry . . . running away from me.

MR. HUXTABLE [in frank confession]. Yes . . . I was. y'know . . . habit.

CONSTANTINE [with the most friendly condescension]. Suppose I go with you . . . part of the way. How do you like it?

MR. HUXTABLE. On a bus.

CONSTANTINE. Suppose we go together . . . on a bus.

MR. HUXTABLE [desperately convinced]. It's all right . . . they won't sulk with you. We don't close till seven.

[CONSTANTINE's face]

CONSTANTINE. No, to be sure. I can't come to dinner, I'm afraid.

PHILIP. Oh, I was going to tell you. Mother will be there. Tommy knows the tea room.

THOMAS [all tact]. Oh, quite!

PHILIP. Straight downstairs, to the left and the second party. I'll follow.

[THOMAS departs. CONSTANTINE says, indifferently . . .]

CONSTANTINE. Then I'll come after dinner.

PHILIP. You don't mind?

CONSTANTINE. No.

[There stands MR. HUXTABLE first on one foot and then

the other, desperately nervous. CONSTANTINE smiling at him. PHILIP cannot resist it. He says . . .]

LIP. It's afterwards now, Uncle. way.

[And is off. CONSTANTINE still smiles. Poor Mr. HUXTABLE makes a desperate effort to do the proper thing by this reprobate. He forms his face into a frown. It's no use; an answering smile will come. He surrenders]

HUXTABLE. Look here . . . let's talk about Amelia.

STANTINE. No . . . never rake past.

HUXTABLE. Lord! What else chap got to think of?

STANTINE. That's why you look

HUXTABLE. Do I, now?

STANTINE. What age are you?

HUXTABLE. Sixty.

[The two sit down together]

STANTINE. You should come and with me at Hit . . . not far from . . . Hillel is Babylon, Harry.

HUXTABLE [curious]. What's it ere?

STANTINE. The house is white, ere are palm trees about it . . . not far off flows the Euphrates.

HUXTABLE. Just like in the [His face is wistful] Constan-

STANTINE. Yes, Harry.

HUXTABLE. You've said odder this afternoon than I've ever you say before.

STANTINE. Probably not.

HUXTABLE [wondering]. And I t really minded em. But I bet's the first time I've ever under-you . . . and p'raps that's just for me.

STANTINE [encouragingly]. Oh why, Harry?

HUXTABLE. Because . . . think it's only not being very keeps us . . . well behaved?

STANTINE. Has it kept you ?

HUXTABLE [impatient at the word]. Anyone can be happy. worries me is having got to my ad only just beginning to under-anything at all. And you can't t out of books, old man. Books tell you the truth . . . at least

not any that I can find. I wonder if I'd been a bit of a dog like you . . . ? But there it is . . . you can't do things on purpose. And what's more, don't you go to think I'd have done them if I could . . . knowing them to be wrong. [Then comes a discovery] But I was always jealous of you, Constantine, for you seemed to get the best of everything . . . and I know people couldn't help being fond of you . . . for I was fond of you myself, whatever you did. That was odd to start with. And now here we are, both of us old chaps . . .

CONSTANTINE [as he throws back his head]. I am not old.

MR. HUXTABLE [with sudden mis-giving]. You don't repent, do you?

CONSTANTINE. What of?

MR. HUXTABLE. Katherine said this morning that you might have . . . but I wasn't afraid of that. [Now he wags his head wisely] You know . . . you evil-doers . . . you upset us all, and you hurt our feelings, and of course you ought to be ashamed of yourself. But . . . well . . . it's like the only time I went abroad. I was sick going . . . I was terribly uncomfortable . . . I ated the cooking . . . I was sick coming back. But I wouldn't have missed it. . . !

CONSTANTINE [in affectionate good fellowship]. Come to Arabia, Harry.

MR. HUXTABLE [humorously pathetic about it]. Don't you make game of me. My time's over. What have I done with it, now? Married. Brought up a family. Been master to a few hundred girls and fellows who never really cared a bit for me. I've been made a convenience of . . . that's my life. That's where I envy you. You've had your own way . . . and you don't look now as if you'd be damned for it, either.

CONSTANTINE [in gentlemanly defiance]. I sha'n't be.

[MR. HUXTABLE shakes a fist, somewhat, though unconsciously, in the direction of the ceiling]

MR. HUXTABLE. It's not fair, and I don't care who hears me say so.

CONSTANTINE. Suppose we shout it from the top of the bus.

[As they start, MR. HUXTABLE returns to his mundane, responsible self]

MR. HUXTABLE. But you know, old man . . . you'll excuse me, I'm sure

... and it's all very well having theories and being able to talk ... still, you did treat Amelia very badly ... and those other ones, too ... say what you like! Let go my arm, will you!

CONSTANTINE. Why?

MR. HUXTABLE [*his scruples less strong than the soft touch of CONSTANTINE's hand*]. Well, p'raps you needn't. [*A thought strikes him*] Are you really going away for good this time?

CONSTANTINE. To-morrow.

MR. HUXTABLE [*beaming on him*]. Then come home and see mother and the girls.

[MAJOR THOMAS comes back, looking about him]

THOMAS. Excuse me ... I left my hat.

CONSTANTINE. It will make them very uncomfortable.

MR. HUXTABLE [*his smile fading*]. D'you think so? Won't it do em good ... broaden their minds?

[PHILIP comes back, too]

MR. HUXTABLE. Phil ... shall I take your father ome to call?

PHILIP [*after one gasp at the prospect, says with great cheerfulness ...*]. Certainly.

CONSTANTINE. I'll be with you by nine, Phil.

[MR. HUXTABLE's dare-devil heart fails once more]

MR. HUXTABLE. I say ... better not be too friendly through the shop.

[CONSTANTINE smiles still, but does not loose his arm. Off they go]

THOMAS [*still searching*]. Where the devil did I put it?

PHILIP. Pity you can't take father's place at dinner, Tommy.

[THOMAS stops and looks at him aggrievedly]

THOMAS. Are you chaffing me?

PHILIP. We might get some further light on the Woman Question. My mother's opinion and Jessica's upon such men as you and my father.

[He picks up some papers and sits to them at the table]

THOMAS. Look here, Phil ... don't you aggravate me into behaving rashly. Here it is.

[He has found his hat on a gas-bracket — and he slams it on]

PHILIP. With Jessica?

THOMAS [*with ferocious gallantry*]. Yes ... a damned attractive woman.

PHILIP. After all ... as a stract proposition, Tommy ... andry is just as simple a way ... as far as we know, as much N ... way as the other. We ought to put that point to the gentle Mah ... dan.

THOMAS [*after vainly considering for a moment*]. Phil, I should see you in love with a woman. It'd serve you right.

[Suddenly PHILIP drops his voice, his tone and his face gentle and grave]

PHILIP. Tommy ... what's the purpose of it all? Apart from the sentimental wallowings of Mr. E. Perrin State ... and putting Lord of Creation, my father, aside for a moment ... what slow-breeding, civilised people get out of love ... and the beauty of ... and the artistic setting that demands? For which we do pay a big price, you know, Tommy. What do we get for it?

THOMAS [*utterly at sea*]. I don't know.

PHILIP. It's an important question. Think it over in the train.

THOMAS. Old chap ... I beg your pardon ... the County Council is the best place for you. It'll stop adding over these silly conundrums.

PHILIP [*subtly*]. On the contrary.

THOMAS [*his favourite phrase*]. What do you mean?

PHILIP. Get out ... you'll be there that four-thirty.

[THOMAS gets out. PHILIP looks desperately at his loathed bus]

ACT IV

PHILIP, his mother, and JESSICA sitting, after dinner, round the drawing-room fire in Philip's Gardens. JESSICA, rather, is sitting upon the bench of her long piano, sorting bound books of ... and the firelight hardly reaches her. But it flickers over MRS. M ... and though it marks more the little bitter lines on her face, it leaves a glow there in recognition. She sits, poor, anxious old woman, gazing, not into the fire, but at the shining copper-fender, her hand on her lap, as usual. Every now

en she lifts her head to listen. PHILIP is comfortable upon the sofa opposite; he is smoking, and is deep, besides, in some weighty volume, the Longman Edition of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, perhaps.

A charming room. The walls are grey, the paint is a darker grey. The curtains to the two long windows are of the gentlest pink brocade; the lights that hang on plain little brackets from the walls are a soft pink, too, and there is no other colour in the room, but the mazziness of some Persian rugs on the floor and the mellowed brilliancy of the rundel prints on the walls. There is no more furniture than there need be; there is not more light than there need be; yet it is not empty or dreary. There is just nothing to prevent a sensitive soul finding rest there.

A parlour maid comes in; she is dressed in grey, too, capless, some black ribbons about her. (Really, JESSICA's home inclines to be a little precious!) She brings letters, one for JESSICA, two for PHILIP, and departs]

PHILIP. Last post.

JESSICA. Half-past nine. I suppose Father means to come?

PHILIP. He said so.

MRS. MADRAS. Is your letter in, Jessica?

JESSICA. A receipt.

MRS. MADRAS. Do you run bills?

JESSICA. Lots.

MRS. MADRAS. Is that quite wise?

JESSICA. The tradesmen prefer it.

[With that she walks to her writing table. JESSICA's manner to her mother-in-law is over-courteous, an unkind weapon against which the old lady, but half-conscious of it, is quite defenceless. PHILIP has opened his second letter, and whistles, at its contents, a bar of a tune that is in his head]

JESSICA. What's the matter, Phil?

[To emphasise his feelings he performs the second bar with variations]

JESSICA. As bad as that?

[For final comment he brings the matter to a full close on one

expressive note, and puts the letter away. JESSICA flicks at him amusedly]

MRS. MADRAS. How absurd! You can't tell in the least what he means.

JESSICA. No.

[With forced patience she wanders back to her piano]

MRS. MADRAS. You might play us something, Jessica . . . just to pass the time.

[Unobserved, JESSICA casts her eyes up to the ceiling]

JESSICA. What will you have?

MRS. MADRAS. I am sure you play all the latest things.

JESSICA. I'm afraid you don't really like my playing.

MRS. MADRAS. I do think it's a little professional. I prefer something softer.

[JESSICA leaves the piano]

JESSICA. I'm afraid we are giving you a dull evening.

MRS. MADRAS [with that suddenness which seems to characterise the HUXTABLE family]. Why do you never call me mother, Jessica?

JESSICA. Don't I?

MRS. MADRAS [resenting prevarication]. You know you don't.

JESSICA. I suppose I don't think of you just like that.

MRS. MADRAS. What has that to do with it?

JESSICA [more coldly courteous than ever]. Nothing . . . Mother.

MRS. MADRAS. That's not a very nice manner of giving way, either, is it?

JESSICA [on the edge of an outburst]. It seemed to me sufficiently childish.

MRS. MADRAS [parading a double injury]. I don't know what you mean. It's easy to be too clever for me, Jessica.

[PHILIP mercifully intervenes]

PHILIP. Mother, what do you think parents gain by insisting on respect and affection from grown-up children?

MRS. MADRAS. Isn't it their right?

PHILIP. But I asked what they gained.

MRS. MADRAS. Isn't it natural? When an old woman has lost her husband, or worse, if she's to lose her children, too, what has she left?

JESSICA [recovering a little kindness]. Her womanhood, Mother.

PHILIP. Her old-womanhood. You know, it may be a very beautiful possession.

[The parlour maid announces "Mr. Constantine Madras." There stands Constantine in the bright light of the hall, more dramatically dignified than ever. As he comes in, though, it seems as if there was the slightest strain in his charming manners. He has not changed his clothes for the evening. He goes straight to JESSICA, and it seems that he has a curious soft way of shaking hands with women]

CONSTANTINE. How do you do, Jessica? I find you looking beautiful.

[JESSICA acknowledges the compliment with a little disdainful bend of the head and leaves him, then with a glance at PHILIP leaves the room. CONSTANTINE comes towards his wife. She does not look up, but her face wrinkles pathetically. So he speaks at last]

CONSTANTINE. Well, Amelia?

[For MRS. MADRAS it must be resentment or tears, or both. Resentment comes first]

MRS. MADRAS. Is that the way to speak to me after thirty years?

CONSTANTINE [amicably]. Perhaps it isn't. But there's not much variety of choice in greetings, is there?

[PHILIP, nodding to his father, has edged to the door, and now edges out of it]

CONSTANTINE. They leave us alone. We might be an engaged couple.

[She stays silent, distressfully avoiding his eye. He takes a chair and sits by her. He would say (as JESSICA no doubt would say of herself) that he speaks kindly to her]

CONSTANTINE. Well, Amelia? I beg your pardon. I repeat myself, and you dislike the phrase. I hope, though, that you are quite well? Don't cry, dear Amelia . . . unless, of course, you want to cry. Well, then . . . cry. And, when you've finished crying . . . there's no hurry . . . you shall tell me why you wished to see me . . . and run the risk of upsetting yourself like this.

MRS. MADRAS [dabbing her eyes]. I don't often cry. I don't often get a chance.

CONSTANTINE. I fear that is only one way of saying that you miss me.

[The handkerchief is put away, and she faces him]

MRS. MADRAS. Are you really back to that country to-morrow?

CONSTANTINE. To-morrow morning.

MRS. MADRAS. For good?

CONSTANTINE [with thanks]. For ever.

MRS. MADRAS [desperately]. Will you take me with you?

[It takes CONSTANTINE a moment to recover]

CONSTANTINE. No, Amelia, I cannot.

MRS. MADRAS [re-acting a hysterically]. I'm sure I don't want to go, and I'm sure I never mean to ask you. But you haven't changed a bit, Constantine . . . in spite of your beard. [Then the voice saddens almost dies away] I have.

CONSTANTINE. Only externally, I'm sure.

MRS. MADRAS. Why did you marry me? You married me for my money.

CONSTANTINE [sighting boredom]. It is so long ago.

MRS. MADRAS. It isn't. It seems like yesterday. Didn't you marry me for my money?

CONSTANTINE. Partly, I think. Partly. Why did you marry me?

MRS. MADRAS. I wanted to know if you were a fool.

CONSTANTINE [evenly still]. You are a fool, perhaps, to grumble at the consequence of getting what you want. It would have been kinder of me to doubt, not to marry you. But I was more impetuous then, and, of course, less experienced. I didn't realise that you never could change your idea of a good husband must be, nor that necessarily it would become that should.

MRS. MADRAS. How dare you make excuses for the way you treated me?

CONSTANTINE. There were two excuses. I was the first. I'm sure that you ultimately became the same.

MRS. MADRAS [with spirit]. I stood up for my rights.

CONSTANTINE. You got them. We separated, and there was an end of it.

MRS. MADRAS. I've never been happy since.

CONSTANTINE. That is nothing to be proud of, my dear.

[MRS. MADRAS feels the strangeness between them wearing the same faces]

MRS. MADRAS. What happens

woman and her son . . . that

STANTINE. The son is an en-
... promises very well, his
pers tell me. Flora lives at
... quite comfortably, I have
to believe.

MADRAS. She was older than

STANTINE. About the same age,

MADRAS. You've given her

STANTINE [*his eyebrows up*]. Cer-
... they were both provided

MADRAS. Don't you expect
be jealous?

STANTINE [*with a sigh*]. Still,

MADRAS. Do you ever see her

STANTINE. I haven't seen her

MADRAS. It seems to me she
en just as well treated as I have
not better.

STANTINE. She expected less.

MADRAS. And what about the

STANTINE [*his patience giving out*].
ally, it's thirty years ago . . . I
fight my battles over again.
tell me what I can do for you
taking you back with me.

MADRAS [*covering to the least*
ess]. I didn't mean that. I
know what made me say it.
t's dreadful seeing you once
and being alone with you.

STANTINE. Now, Amelia, are you
to cry again?

MADRAS [*setting her teeth*]. No.

STANTINE. That's right.

[*Mrs. MADRAS really does pull*
herself together, and becomes
intensely reasonable]

MADRAS. What I really want
do, if you please, Constantine,
to go away. I don't expect us
together . . . after the way
ve behaved I could not consent
a thing. But somebody must
fter you when you are ill, and,
more, I don't think you ought
and die out of your own country.

STANTINE [*meeting reason with*
]. My dear . . . I have formed
ies.

MADRAS. Will you please ex-
actly what you mean by that?

CONSTANTINE. I am a Mahommedan.

MRS. MADRAS. Nonsense!

CONSTANTINE. Possibly you are not
acquainted with the Mahommedan
marriage laws.

MRS. MADRAS. D'you mean to say
you're not married to me?

CONSTANTINE. No . . . though it
was not considered necessary for me
to take that into account in conforming
to it . . . I did.

MRS. MADRAS. Well . . . I never
thought you could behave any worse.
Why weren't you satisfied in making
me unhappy? If you've gone and
committed blasphemy as well . . . I
don't know what's to become of you,
Constantine.

CONSTANTINE. Amelia, if I had been
a Mahommedan from the beginning
you might be living happily with me
now.

MRS. MADRAS. How can you say
such a horrible thing? Suppose it
were true?

CONSTANTINE. I came from the
East.

MRS. MADRAS. You didn't.

CONSTANTINE. Let us be quite ac-
curate. My grandfather was a Smyrna
Jew.

MRS. MADRAS. You never knew
him. Your mother brought you up a
Baptist.

CONSTANTINE. I was an unworthy
Baptist. As a Baptist I owe you
apologies for my conduct. What does
that excellent creed owe me for the
little hells of temptation and shame
and remorse that I passed through
because of it?

MRS. MADRAS [*in pathetic wonder*].
Did you, Constantine?

CONSTANTINE. I did.

MRS. MADRAS. You never told me.

CONSTANTINE [*with manly pride*]. I
should think not.

MRS. MADRAS. But I was longing
to have you say you were sorry, and
let me forgive you. Twice and three
times I'd have forgiven you . . . and
you knew it, Constantine.

[*CONSTANTINE recovers his*
humour, his cool courtesy,
and his inhumanity, which
he had momentarily lost]

CONSTANTINE. Yes, it wasn't so
easy to escape your forgiveness. If
it weren't for Mahomet, the Prophet
of God, Amelia, I should hardly be
escaping it now.

[PHILIP comes delicately in]

PHILIP. I beg pardon . . . only my book.

[Which he takes from the piano]

CONSTANTINE. Don't go, Phil.

[So PHILIP joins them, and then, as silence supervenes, says, with obvious cheerfulness]

PHILIP. How are you getting on?

MRS. MADRAS [her tongue released]. Philip, don't be flippant. It's just as your cousin Ernest said. Your father has gone and pretended to marry a lot of wretched women out in that country you showed me on the map, and I don't know what's to be done. My head's going round.

CONSTANTINE. Not a lot, Amelia.

MRS. MADRAS. And if anybody had told me, when I was a girl at school, and learning about such things in History and Geography, that I should ever find myself in such a situation as this, I wouldn't have believed them. [She piles up the agony] Constantine, how are you going to face me Hereafter? Have you thought of that? Wasn't our marriage made in Heaven? I must know what is going to happen to us . . . I simply must. I have always prayed that you might come back to me, and that I might close your eyes in death. You know I have, Philip, and I've asked you to tell him so. He has no right to go and do such wicked things. You're mine in the sight of God, Constantine, and you can't deny it.

[Without warning, CONSTANTINE loses his temper, jumps up and thunders at her]

CONSTANTINE. Woman . . . be silent. [Then, as in shame, he turns his back on her and says in the coldest voice . . .] Philip, I have several things to talk over with you. Suggest to your mother that she should leave us alone.

PHILIP [protesting against both temper and dignity]. I shall do nothing of the sort. While my father's in England, and you're in our house, he can at least treat his wife with politeness.

MRS. MADRAS [with meek satisfaction]. I'd rather he didn't . . . it's only laughing at me. I'll go to bed. I'd much rather he lost his temper.

[She gets up to go. CONSTANTINE'S bitter voice stops her]

CONSTANTINE. Phil . . . when you

were a boy . . . your mother once quarrelled in your presence.

PHILIP [in bitterness, too]. I remember.

CONSTANTINE. I'm ashamed of this day.

MRS. MADRAS [quite pleased]. Well . . . I'm sure I don't remember it. What about?

CONSTANTINE. Oh . . . this to country. Every hour I stay in it to rob me of some atom of self-respect.

[MRS. MADRAS joins battle at this]

MRS. MADRAS. Then why did you come back? And why haven't you been to see me before . . . or write to me?

CONSTANTINE [in humorous defence]. Amelia, don't aggravate me any more. Go to bed, if you're going.

MRS. MADRAS. I wish I'd never seen you again.

PHILIP. Good-night, Mother.

[PHILIP gets her to the door, kisses her kindly. Then CONSTANTINE says, with a meaning possible . . .]

CONSTANTINE. Good-bye, Amelia. [She turns, the bright hall falling on her, looks at him hatefully, makes no other remark and goes. PHILIP comes back, looks at the fire. All this is before he goes to bed. He eyes his father.]

CONSTANTINE. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I was upset when I came home.

PHILIP. What about? The view from Denmark Hill?

CONSTANTINE [who has apparently forgotten that]. No . . . I didn't go there, after all.

PHILIP. Funked it?

CONSTANTINE [accepting the gift of a daresay]. Once we were off the subject, Harry began to mutter about his feelings. I daresay I was wrong, too. I told him to tell them unbendingly moral he had been wrong. He shed three tears as we parted.

PHILIP. Yes . . . my mother alone here. She's a disappointed woman . . . peevish with ill health. One has her at a disadvantage. Aunt Kate . . . unveiled and confronted with six corseted daughters to back her.

CONSTANTINE. You think, of course, that I've always treated your mother badly?

PHILIP. I can't help thinking so. Was it the only way to treat her?

CONSTANTINE. Was I meant to pass
st of a lifetime making her forget
she was as unhappy as people
ave outlived their purpose always

LIP. Personally, I have this
e against you both, my dear
e. As the son of a quarrelsome
age, I have grown up inclined
like men and despise women.
e so full of this purpose of getting
xt generation born. Suppose you
at a little more of its upbringing.

CONSTANTINE. What was wrong
yours?

LIP. I had no home.

CONSTANTINE. You spent a Sunday
me every month. You went to
anliest school I could find.

LIP. Never mind how I learnt
and Greek. Who taught me
very pretty, helpless woman was
s's prey . . . and how to order
fe out of the room?

CONSTANTINE [*with a shrug*]. My
oy . . . they like it.

LIP. Do they?

CONSTANTINE. Well . . . how else
u to manage them?

LIP. Father, don't you realise
. in decadent England, at least,
anliness of yours is getting a little
f date . . . that you and your
egin to look foolish at last?

CONSTANTINE [*voicing the discomfort
ossesses him*]. I daresay. Thank
I shall be quit of the country to-
w! I got here late this evening
e I travelled three stations too
that Tube, sitting opposite such
ty little devil. She was so alive
o crying out for conquest . . .
d that curve of the instep and
ttle trick of swinging her foot
never could resist. How does
resist it? Yes. That's ridicu-
ad ignominious and degrading. I
d from England to escape from
ld age here . . . a loose lip and
ive eye. I'd have asked you to
me first.

LIP. Was it that upset you?

CONSTANTINE. No.

[*He frowns; his thoughts are
much elsewhere. There is a
moment's silence.* PHILIP
breaks it]

LIP. Father, what do you know
this Miss Yates affair?

[CONSTANTINE gives him a sharp
look; then carefully casual . . .]

CONSTANTINE. What you've told me.

PHILIP. No more?

CONSTANTINE. Is there more to
know?

[PHILIP fishes out and hands
across the letter over which he
whistled]

PHILIP. This has just come from
Miss Chancellor.

CONSTANTINE. Who's she?

PHILIP. The housekeeper at Peck-
ham, who rashly accused Brigstock of
being the other responsible party.

CONSTANTINE. Is he?

PHILIP. I think not. But she en-
closes a letter she has just had from
Brigstock's solicitors, to the effect that
both an apology and compensation is
due to him unless the slander is to
come into court. Hers faithfully, Mey-
rick & Hodges.

CONSTANTINE. I don't know them.

PHILIP. We were all still making
personal remarks at half-past twelve
to-day . . . so by their expedition I
should say they both are and are not
a first-class firm. But suppose the
whole thing is made public . . . then
the question of the parentage must be
cleared up. Miss Yates says it's no-
body's business but hers. That's an
odd idea, in which, if she chooses to
have it, the law seems to support her.

[*The steady eye and the steady
voice have seemed to make the
tension unbearable, and PHILIP
has meant them to. But he
hardly expected this outburst.*
CONSTANTINE, in his own dra-
matically dignified way, has a
fit of hysterics]

CONSTANTINE. Phil, I saw the little
baggage when the shop closed. I in-
sisted on her meeting me. You know
how I've always behaved over these
matters. No one could have been
kinder. But she refused money.

PHILIP [*calling on the gods to witness
this occasion*]. Well . . . I might have
guessed. Oh . . . you incorrigible old
man!

CONSTANTINE. She insulted me . . .
said she'd done with me . . . denied me
the right to my own child. I'd even have
taken her away. But you're helpless.
I never felt so degraded in my life.

PHILIP. Serve you right!

CONSTANTINE. . . . But the girl's
mad! Think of my feelings. What
does it make of me? Did she know
what she was saying?

PHILIP [*framing his thoughts at last*]. Possibly not . . . but I'm thankful some woman's been found at last to put you in your place.

[*These parental-filial passages have brought the two of them face to face, strung to shouting pitch. They become aware of it when JESSICA walks in very gently*]

JESSICA. Your mother gone?

PHILIP. To bed.

JESSICA [*conscious of thunder*]. Am I intruding? I sent Phil in for his book a while ago. He didn't return, so I judged that he was. Perhaps I'm not?

[*CONSTANTINE is master of himself again, though the hand holding the letter which PHILIP gave him does tremble a little still*]

CONSTANTINE. Well . . . what does Miss Chancellor want?

PHILIP. She asks my advice.

CONSTANTINE. Dismiss Baxter.

PHILIP. D'you mean Brigstock?

CONSTANTINE. Brigstock, then. Dismiss him.

PHILIP. What's he done to deserve it?

CONSTANTINE. He seems a nonentity of a fellow, and without grit enough to own up to his wife and risk his place. D'you want to protect a man from the consequences of what he is?

PHILIP. Society conspires to.

CONSTANTINE. Then pay him fifty pounds for the damage to his silly little reputation. That'll be a just consequence to you of sentimentalising over him.

PHILIP. And stick to Miss Chancellor?

CONSTANTINE. Certainly. Thank her from the firm for nosing out such a scandal.

PHILIP. And what about Miss Yates?

JESSICA. The girl in your office this morning?

PHILIP. Yes.

JESSICA. In the usual trouble?

PHILIP. How d'you know that?

JESSICA. By the tone of your voice.

CONSTANTINE [*more slowly, more carefully, a little resentfully*]. Dismiss Miss Yates. Keep your eye on her . . . and in a year's time find her a better place . . . if you can . . . in one of these new Madras Houses of State's.

He seems to pay very well. *with a breath of relief he becomes old charming self again*] Let us drop the subject. How is Mildred, Jess?

JESSICA. Growing.

CONSTANTINE. I've an appointment with my solicitor to-night . . . o'clock. There will be two or three thousand pounds to come to the young lady by my will. I must leave it as a dowry for her marriage . . . its interest to be paid to her. She's a spinster at thirty . . . Heaven forbid.

PHILIP. What are you doing the rest, Father?

CONSTANTINE. There are only two . . . legacies of honour, shall I call them? What remains will come.

PHILIP. Yes . . . I don't want to thank you.

CONSTANTINE. It isn't much.

PHILIP. Take it to Hit, that village on the borders of So. Arabia. Stick it in the ground and let it breed more corn and oil for us. We've too much of it already. It breeds idleness here.

CONSTANTINE. Dear me!

[*They settle into*]

JESSICA. We're discussing a reduction of our income by a few hundred a year.

PHILIP. I'm refusing State's dish.

JESSICA. Though I'm waiting for Phil to tell me where the savings come in.

PHILIP. We ought to change the school of Mildred's, for one thing.

JESSICA. Nonsense, Phil!

PHILIP. My dear father, I spend my day there with the child, and by my word, the only thing she's taught which will not be a mere accomplishment is gardening. Even in their gardens . . . No tables allowed!

JESSICA. Phil, I don't mean to have any nonsense with Mildred earning her living. Accomplished women have a very good time in the world . . . serious women don't want my daughter to be happy.

PHILIP. If we've only enough left to be happy with we must be ourselves decently poor.

[*CONSTANTINE goes*]

CONSTANTINE. Could you get a taxi, I wonder? It had started raining when I came.

PHILIP. There'll be one on the opposite.

CONSTANTINE. I mustn't be too late to-morrow. He makes a favour of going after hours.

JESSICA. I frankly cultivate expensiveness. I like to have things useful around me. I don't know of any other civilisation means.

CONSTANTINE. I am sure that Philip will refuse you nothing.

PHILIP. If I do dismiss Miss Yates, consider if I could do it brutally enough to induce her to accept some compensation.

JESSICA. What for?

PHILIP. She won't take money from a gentleman . . . whoever he is . . . unless, she won't be bribed into adding to her shame.

JESSICA. When a woman has gone wrong mayn't it be her duty to other people to own up to it?

CONSTANTINE [*who has stood still the while, stroking his beard*]. If your offers won't pass any decent sum, I should be happy to send you a cheque,

PHILIP [*with a wry smile*]. That would be very generous of you, Father.

CONSTANTINE. Good-bye, Jessica.

JESSICA. Good-bye.

CONSTANTINE. Philip is fortunate in his marriage.

JESSICA. So good of you to remind me of that.

CONSTANTINE. You have a charming daughter. I wonder how much of your own civilisation it would have cost you to conquer me. Well . . . I leave you to your conversation. A pleasant life to you.

[*He bends over her hand as if to kiss it. She takes it, as if fastidiously, out of his soft grasp. So he bows again and leaves her*]

CONSTANTINE. Victoria at eleven to-morrow, Philip.

PHILIP. Yes . . . I'll see you off.

CONSTANTINE. I have to do a little shopping quite early.

PHILIP. Shopping! What can the father send the East?

CONSTANTINE. I must take back a hat or two.

PHILIP. To be sure. We do the shopping on our travels.

[*PHILIP sees him through the hall to the front door, hails a stray cab, and is quit of him.* JES-

SICA moves about as if to free the air of this visitation, and when PHILIP comes back . . .]

JESSICA. Does your father usually scatter cheques so generously and carelessly?

PHILIP. Jessica, while I have every respect for that young lady's independence . . . still two hundred pounds would be all to the good of the child's upbringing . . . and / why shouldn't Miss Yates keep her secret?

JESSICA. Yes. I don't like your father. And I'm sometimes afraid that you're only an intellectual edition of him. It's very vital, of course, to go about seducing everybody to your own way of thinking. But really it's not quite civilised. You ought to learn to talk about the weather.

PHILIP. I cannot talk about what can't be helped.

[*He had settled to a chair and a cigarette, but on the impulse he abandons both and starts a lively argument instead. PHILIP's excited arguments are carried on in short dashes about the room and with queer un-English gestures*]

PHILIP. And I wonder more and more what the devil you all mean by civilisation. This room is civilisation. Whose civilisation? Not ours.

JESSICA [*in mock despair*]. Oh, dear!

PHILIP. Cheer up. Didn't you marry me because I thought more of Bach than Offenbach? Why shouldn't you share a fresh set of convictions? This sort of marriage is worth while, you know. Even one's quarrels have a certain dignity.

JESSICA. Go ahead . . . bless your heart.

PHILIP [*shaking his fist at the world in general*]. Whitechapel High Street's our civilisation.

JESSICA. I don't know it.

PHILIP. Therefore you don't much matter, my dear . . . any more than my father did with his view of life as a sort of love-chase. [*He surveys the charming room that is his home*] Persian carpet on the floor. Last Supper, by Ghirlandajo, over the mantelpiece. The sofa you're sitting on was made in a forgotten France. This is a museum. And down at that precious school what are they cultivating Mildred's mind into but another museum . . . of good manners and good taste and . . . [*He*

catches JESSICA's half scornful, half kindly-quizzical look] Are we going to have a row about this?

JESSICA. If you Idealists want Mildred to live in the Whitechapel Road . . . make it a fit place for her.

PHILIP [*taking the thrust and enjoyably returning it*]. When she lives in it it will become so. Why do I give up designing dresses and running a fashion shop to go on the County Council . . . if I can get on? And not to cut a fine figure there, either. But to be on a committee or committees. Not to talk finely even then . . . Lord keep me from the temptation . . . but to do dull, hard work over drains and disinfectants and . . .

JESSICA. Well . . . why, Phil? I may as well know.

PHILIP. To save my soul alive.

JESSICA. I'm sure I hope you may. But what is it we're to cultivate in poor Mildred's soul?

[*PHILIP stops in his walk, and then . . .*]

PHILIP. Why not a sense of ugliness? Have you ever really looked at a London street . . . walked slowly up and down it three times . . . carefully testing it with every cultured sense?

JESSICA. Yes . . . it's loathsome.

PHILIP. Then what have you done?

JESSICA. What can one do?

PHILIP. Come home to play a sonata of Beethoven! Does that drown the sights and the sounds and the smell of it?

JESSICA. Yes . . . it does.

PHILIP [*in fierce revolt*]. Not to me . . . my God . . . not to me!

JESSICA [*gently bitter*]. For so many women, Phil, art has to make life possible.

PHILIP. Suppose we teach Mildred to look out of the window at the life outside. We want to make that impossible. Neither Art nor Religion nor good manners have made of the world a place I'll go on living in if I can help it. [*He throws himself into a chair*] D'you remember in my young days when I used to spend part of a holiday lecturing on Shelley?

JESSICA. Yes.

PHILIP. I remember once travelling in the train with a poor wretch who lived . . . so he told me . . . on what margins of profit he could pick up by standing rather incompetently between the corn field and the baker . . . or the

coal mine and the fire . . . or landowner and the tenant . . . get which. And he was weary irritable and unhealthy. And he Jones . . . because Jones had him out of a half per cent. on hundred and fifty pounds . . . the sum had been bigger he'd sued him, so he would. And the of Prometheus was running in head . . . This, like thy glory, is to be Good, great and joyous, tiful and free . . . and I thought a mean fellow. And then he told how he dreaded bankruptcy, and his uncle, who had been a clerk come to the workhouse . . . and a disgrace that was. And I'm sure he was a little drunk. And I wondered whether it would be possible interest him in the question of his position as a prosodist . . . or whether even the beauties of Prometheus could comfort him at all. But when he told me what I was going to Manchester for . . . do you know, I was ashamed to tell him?

[*There falls a little silence. voices hardly break it*]

JESSICA. Yes . . . a terrible . . . an ugly, stupid, wasteful world. A hateful world!

PHILIP. And yet we have to Mildred what love of the world means Jessica. Even if it's an uncomfortable business. Even if it means not a her to that aristocracy of good feeling and good taste . . . the very latest class distinctions. I tell you I have come by these doubts so easily. Beautiful sounds and sights and thoughts all of the world's heritage I care for. Giving them up is like giving my fully created soul out of my keeping before I die.

JESSICA [*with a sudden fling of hands*]. And into whose?

PHILIP [*shaking his head at the*] I'm afraid into the keeping of everybody we are at present tempted to dislike and despise. For that's the Life. That's Democracy. But the Future. [*He looks across at his wife half curiously*] I know it's harder for you women. You put your armour for a man you love. Otherwise you've your Honour and Dignity and Purity . . .

JESSICA. Do you want a world without that, either?

PHILIP. I rather want to know

the world gets by it. Those six girls at my uncle's . . . what do they get from them or they from the world? Little Miss Yates, now . . . her transgressions may be the most pardonable thing about her . . .

JESSICA. Two wrongs don't make a right.

PHILIP [*quaintly*]. They often do seem properly mixed. Of course you could serve yourselves up to the gods of creation as my father would profitably, in one sense, if you

JESSICA [*her lip curling*]. Thank you, but we're not cattle.

PHILIP. No. Then there's a price paid for free womanhood, I think, and how many of you ladies are going to pay it? Come out and be seen on women among us common

[*He leans towards her, and his voice deepens*] Jessica, do you feel that you've shot that poor devil six years ago? . . . that it's you who are to be hanged to-morrow?

JESSICA. I don't think I do.

PHILIP. That it's your body is being seen in some street this evening?

[*She gives a little most genuine shudder*]

JESSICA. I hate to think about such things.

PHILIP [*summing up*]. Then there's but a little hope for the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. I know it's all mere nonsense, but I'm sure it's true. If we can't love the bad as well as the beautiful . . . if we won't let it all out now . . . fresh air and light . . . and dirt and sin . . . then good and clever people are costing the world too much. Our brains cost too much if we don't give them freely. Beauty costs too much if I only have it because of the uglier women . . . even your virtue may cost too much, my dear. Rags pay for beauty, and ugliness for beauty, and sin for virtue. Why can nothing keep us from getting more beauty in a good man's face than the ugliest thing on earth? Why need no man be wiser than the stupidest fool on earth? Why does it seem that neither man nor woman to be more righteous than the greatest sinner on earth? [*He clenches his hands*] These are the riddles this Sphinx of a world is asking me. Your artists and poets and preachers don't answer them . . . so I must turn my back for

a bit on artist and scholar and preacher . . . all three.

[*JESSICA looks at him as he completes his apologia, sympathetic, if not understanding. Then she rallies him cheerfully*]

JESSICA. Meanwhile, my dear Phil, I shall not stop subscribing to the London Symphony Concerts . . . and I shall expect you to take me occasionally.

PHILIP [*jumping back from his philosophic world*]. Oh . . . that reminds me . . . I've a message for you from Tommy.

JESSICA. Have you? He was really irritating this morning.

PHILIP. We must take Tommy with a sense of humour. It wasn't so much a message as one of those little bursts of childlike confidence . . . he endears himself to one with them from time to time.

JESSICA. About me?

PHILIP. Yes. What it comes to is this. Will you please not flirt with him any more, because he hasn't the time, and he's too fond both of me and his wife to want to find himself seriously in love with you.

[*Now PHILIP has not said this unguardedly, and JESSICA knows it. She'll walk into no little trap set for her vanity or the like. Still, it is with hardly a steady voice that she says simply . . .*]

JESSICA. Thank you for the message.

[*PHILIP goes cheerfully on; he is turning the pages of his book*]

PHILIP. He doesn't at all suppose you are in love with him . . . seriously or otherwise.

JESSICA [*steadily*]. Do you?

PHILIP. No.

JESSICA [*her tone sharpening still*]. And is this the first time you've discussed me with Tommy or anyone? Please let it be the last.

PHILIP. Are you angry, Jessica?

JESSICA. I'm more than angry.

PHILIP. I'm sorry.

[*Having kept her temper successfully, if not the sense of humour which PHILIP warned her he was appealing to, JESSICA now allows herself a deliberate outburst of indignation*]

JESSICA. I despise men. I despised them when I was fifteen . . . the first year I was conscious of them. I've

been through many opinions since . . . and I come back to despising them.

PHILIP. He was afraid you wouldn't be pleased with him. But he has my sympathies, Jessica.

JESSICA [*throwing back her head*]. Has he!

PHILIP. Tommy is what the entertaining State called this afternoon the Mean Sensual Man.

JESSICA [*with utter contempt*]. Yes. When we're alone, having a jolly talk about things in general, he's all the time thinking I want him to kiss me.

PHILIP. While what you really want is to have him wanting to kiss you but never to kiss you.

JESSICA [*in protest*]. No.

PHILIP [*fixing her with a finger*]. Oh, yes, Jessica.

[*JESSICA's sense of humour returns for a moment*]

JESSICA. Well . . . I can't help it if he does.

PHILIP. You can, of course. And the Mean Sensual Man calls it being made a fool of.

[*She puts a serious face on it again; not that she can keep one with PHILIP's twinkling at her*]

JESSICA. I give you my word I've never tried to flirt with Tommy . . . except once or twice when he has been boring me. And perhaps once or twice when I was in the dumps . . . and there he was . . . and I was boring him. I know him too well to flirt with him . . . you can't flirt with a man you know well. But he's been boring me lately, and I suppose I've been a bit bored. But suppose I have been flirting with him . . . I thought he was safe enough. [*That attempt failing, there is a tack left, and on this she really manages to work herself back to indignation*] And a caddish thing to go speaking to you about it.

PHILIP. So he said . . . so he said.

JESSICA. Worse than caddish . . . outrageous! I never heard of such a thing . . . you shouldn't have let him.

PHILIP. Should I have knocked him down when he mentioned your name?

JESSICA. Yes . . . I wish you had.

PHILIP. Little savage!

JESSICA. I can't laugh about this. I'm hurt.

PHILIP. My dear, if you have any

sense at all, you'll ask him to and chaff him about it . . . before

JESSICA. Have you any understanding of what a woman feels when treat her like this? Degraded and cheapened.

[*But the high moral tone will not stand. He drops and tackles her*]

PHILIP. I can tell you what a man feels. He'll be either my or me. That's your choice. Tommy my father when you've put on the best gown to attract him, or he when he honestly says that he'd rather you wouldn't. Do you want him to be me or my father? That's the question for you.

JESSICA. I want a man to treat a woman with courtesy and respect.

PHILIP. And what does that mean to? My dear, don't you know the Mean Sensual Man . . . not Tommy for the moment, but say Harry . . . looks on you as choice morsels . . . with your pinnacles, your dressings up, your graces and art as so much sauce to his appetite. Which only a mysterious thing about your virtue prevents him from indulging . . . almost by force, if it were not for the police, Jessica. Do you wonder that?

JESSICA. I don't believe it.

PHILIP. Do you really believe that most men's good manners toward most pretty women are anything but good manners?

JESSICA. I prefer good manners to yours. [*Then, both fine taste and sense of humour to the rescue*]. No . . . that's rude.

PHILIP [*with much more affection than the words convey*]. I treat you as a man would treat another man, neither better nor worse. Is the compliment quite wasted?

JESSICA [*as amazed at this unreasonable world*]. I want to be friends with you. I'd sooner be friends with them than they who flirt with me. Why?

PHILIP [*incurably mischievous*]. Of course I've forgotten what you are like, and I never notice what you do on . . . but I suspect it's because you're rather pretty and attractive.

JESSICA. Do you want women to be?

PHILIP. No.

JESSICA. It's perfectly sickening. Of course, if I had dozens of chil-

rew an old woman with the last
should be quite out of danger.
e can't all be like that . . . you
want us to be.

LIP [purely negative]. No.

[He leaves her free to justify herself]

SICA. I do my share of things.
ke a home for you. I entertain
riends. It may cost your precious
too much . . . my civilisation
ut you want all this done.
with a certainly womanly reserve]
Phil . . . suppose I'm not much
y nature than some of you men?

I was a baby, if I'd not been
ous I should have been a sad
n. My culture . . . my civilisa-
. . . mayn't be quite up to keep-
he brilliant Tommy a decent
to me, but it has its uses.

[But PHILIP means to laugh this
out of court, too]

LIP. Look here, if it's only your
e keeps you from kissing Tommy
kiss him.

[To be so driven from pillar to
post really does exasperate her]

SICA. Phil . . . I sometimes
I'd sooner have been married
father.

LIP. Why?

SICA. If you went on as he did
d of as you do . . . I should be
. . . I should despise you . . .
would string me up and add to
elf-respect enormously! [Then a
ppealingly] But it's when you're
an, Phil . . . that I'm ever so
tempted.

LIP [contrite at once]. I know I
[Then he gets up to stand looking
ic fire, and what he says is heart-
But I do so hate that farm-yard
of sex . . . men and women
s treating each other in this un-
ly way . . . that I'm afraid it
as me a bit.

SICA [from her side, gently, with
look at him]. I hate it, too . . .
happen to love you, Phil.

[They smile at each other]

LIP. Yes, my dear. If you'd
come over here . . . I should
kiss you.

SICA. I won't. You can come
o me.

LIP. Will you meet me half

[They meet half way, and kiss as
husband and wife can. They

stand together, looking into the
fire]

PHILIP. Do you know the sort of
world I want to live in?

JESSICA. Should I like it?

PHILIP. Hasn't Humanity come of
age at last?

JESSICA. Has it?

PHILIP. Mayn't we hope so? Finery
sits so well on children. And they
strut and make love absurdly . . .
even their quarrelling is in all good
faith and innocence. But I don't see
why we men and women should not
find all happiness . . . and beauty, too,
. . . in soberer purposes. And with
each other . . . why not always some
touch of the tranquil understanding
which is yours and mine, dear, at
the best of moments?

JESSICA [happily]. Do you mean
when we sometimes suddenly want to
shake hands?

PHILIP [happily, too]. That's it. And
I want an art and a culture that sha'n't
be just a veneer on savagery . . . but
it must spring in good time from the
happiness of a whole people.

[JESSICA gives herself one little
shake of womanly commonsense]

JESSICA. Well, what's to be done?

PHILIP [nobody more practical than he].
I've been making suggestions. We
must learn to live on a thousand a year
. . . put Mildred to a sensible school
. . . and I must go on the County
Council. That's how these great spiri-
tual revolutions work out in practice,
to begin with.

JESSICA [as one who demands a right].
Where's my share of the job?

PHILIP [conscious of some helplessness].
How is a man to tell you? There's
enough to choose from.

JESSICA [the burden of her sex's
present fate upon her]. Ah, you're
normal. Nobody sizes you up as a
good man or a bad man . . . pretty
or plain. There's a trade for bad
women and several professions for
plain ones. But I've been taught how
to be charming and to like dainty
clothes. And I dare say I'm excitable
and emotional . . . but I can't help
it. I'm well off, married to you, I
know. You do make me forget I'm a
female occasionally.

PHILIP. Male and female created
He them . . . and left us to do the
rest. Men and women are a long
time in the making . . . aren't they?

JESSICA [*enviously*]. Oh . . . you're all right.

PHILIP [*with some humble knowledge of himself*]. Are we?

JESSICA. But I tell you, Phil, it isn't so easy for us. You don't always let us have the fairest of chances, do you?

PHILIP. No, I grant it's not. But it's got to be done.

JESSICA. Yes . . .

[*She doesn't finish, for really is no end to the subject. for a moment or two happy together, they stand ing into the fire*]

THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT

(1910)

BY JOHN MASEFIELD

JOHN MASEFIELD

his essay on Defoe, John Masefield has written that "a man is judged by the type and nobleness of his spiritual convictions." This criticism may very well be applied to Masefield himself. When he returned to America, in 1916, after an absence of over twenty years, having won for himself a foremost position among the younger school of English writers, we were able to judge for ourselves how the literary expression of the artist represented the spiritual fervour of the

may be a dangerous thing for the literary historian to accept Taine's theory as to detect, in casual instances, the influences of a man's life. Masefield himself said that one can never know one's influences. But we may doubt whether, if he had not gone to sea as a boy, we should have been given such an exanthology as "A Sailor's Garland." If he had remained at home, would he have written such graphic sketches of the life and superstitions of the seaman as "A Mainsail Haul"? But Masefield did go to sea. He entrained for years, thinking that his life would be spent aboard a merchantman, and it was only when he was on a ship, going to America to take up a commission, that he came out with himself the problem of a future. He had reached the point where he had to cast the die. During this trip, he realized that, with the promptings to write, on the one hand, and with the training of the sea back of him, on the other, should he accept the commission waiting him in America, the writing impulse would be gone from him forever. So, strange to say, it was not John Masefield the sailor, who stepped ashore on New York soil, but John Masefield, the writer, up against it to such an extent that he scarcely had a sovereign in his pocket. His assets were a whole suit of clothes, a sound pair of shoes, and the undying spirit which still burns from the depths of his blue eyes.

John Masefield fulfils his destiny, his biographers of the future will picture him in his red shirt on a Connecticut farm as we picture Robert Burns at the plough. By a Royal Academician has idealized his seamanship, after the manner of an artist picturing Columbus with globes and astrolabes and far-seeing vision. We might even conjecture that some poetic admirer of Masefield, in the future, will draw from his experiences in the Yonkers carpet factory, in the same spirit that Hood drew from the famous shirt. But we cannot prophesy how the biographers will account for the days spent in Luke O'Connor's saloon.

Masefield struggled as tempestuously in New York as he did at sea. His chief concern was his daily bread. When the sovereign was spent, he became a frequent visitor at pawn shops on Eighth Avenue and Bleecker Street, dispensing with as much of his wardrobe as expediency allowed. We can imagine him wandering up and down Sixth Avenue, illy clad, in search of a job. It is even hinted that he and his friends, whom he had picked up at sea, tried street singing for a livelihood. What characteristics in him appealed to the bartender on Sixth Avenue, we do not

know. But it is a fact that, with his tanned face, acquired on the Conn farm, and with his rough hands, born of rough handling of sails and John Masefield did not look like a tenderfoot when he entered the saloon of the *Luke O'Connor*.

We understand from one source that Masefield's boss declared he retained sufficient dexterity to mix a cocktail. Somewhere in his writings, Masefield himself declares that his duties were :

To clean the glasses which the two artists filled for the thirsty. I, who was not an artist, and could not mix the subtle drinks in vogue, might only serve beer and cigars. . . . I had to see that the piping through which the beer ran to the taps was kept packed in the ice. . . . Twice a week I had to take down the electric light shades, which were of a pinky-blue porcelain, to wash them carefully with soap and water. . . . I slept in a garret in the hotel.

Seekers after literary influences should turn to Masefield's volume, "The Paulin Muster", where there are several short stories reminiscent of this. A sympathetic description of the Hudson River appears in the sketch, "On the Hudson", which points to the way in which Masefield spent his spare time when he was relieved from duty at the carpet factory in Yonkers.

One of the most poignant things about Masefield's experiences in New York was the utter loneliness which beset him. It prompted him in after days to write "Multitude and Solitude", as his experiences at sea were the foundations for "The Margaret", and such volumes as "On the Spanish Main" and "Sea Nelson's Time." However much, in his early years as a boy, he may have read "Percy's Reliques", he must have learned the true rhythms for his "Salt Water Ballads" from the throats of the sailors themselves. He steeped himself, in these early years, in the tradition and in the jargon of the sailor, with the consequence that his "Salt Water Ballads" and his "Story of a Round-House" have to carry glossaries for the better understanding of the ordinary reader.

After his return to London, John Masefield began his literary career. The London critics, in their seizure upon the roughest lines in Masefield's work, as a measure of what they liked to call his uncouthness, are forever quoting those significant words of Synge wherein he is credited with having affirmed, "It may also be said that before verse can be human again, it must learn to be brutal." But a man like Masefield deems it worthy of his interest to treat of themes like "Everlasting Mercy" and "The Widow in the Bye Street"; because, in his very though short, experience as a seaman, he may have striven to catch something fundamental in the life of a sailor; because of his belief that the ugliness of the sea has a legitimate place in the beauty of poetry — the reading public is continually allowing its impression of him to be muddled; it is forever identifying him with brutality, irreverence, formalism, when, as a matter of fact, he is the most sensitive, the most reverent, and the most precise formalist among the English poets of to-day.

As a poet, Masefield has widely contrasting traditions. He has been a writer since a very small boy, with little inclination, during his earlier years, to study to be academic. For he ran away from home when he was fourteen. He has lived taken life as an open book, and he has read from life all that which is measure of a soul's penetration. There is a touch of Shropshire, of Devonshire, of Hertford

s veins. There is a strain of all that is noble in English verse in his execution, having been influenced by Chaucer and Shakespeare in his common sympathy for humanity, and having from some of the noblest English lyrics gained his facility in lyrical form.

As a workman he is not in sympathy with those loose constructionists who cover the shallowness of thought and paucity of vision with a free use of slipshod form. To judge by a comparison of certain poems contained in his "Salt Water Ballads", repeated in his "The Story of a Round-House", Masefield, like Tennyson before him, is continually editing himself, feeling for the right word, for the simplest, rather than for the most ornate form. To him writing is not a painful process, but a very serious occupation. And when we hear him say that he re-wrote "Pompey the Great" eleven times, though some may see in this fact an effort in the peculiar direction which marks the play, others truly see in it only that sensitiveness, that acute sense of the work which is a rare and unusual quality in the writing of to-day.

Masefield has within him the freedom of the sea, the freedom of the untrammelled road; his verse fairly tingles with the memory of them. He is a man of mental and physical adaptability. He finds any road a splendid road. He finds men under all conditions — save those whose life is being frittered away — worthy of prayer. From the time of his literary beginnings, he has been an incessant worker, attempting every form of expression — the novel, the lyric, the narrative poem, the drama, and now, during these war days, descriptive history. It is too much to say that in his "Dauber" he has given us one of the greatest sea poems in English literary history; that in "The Widow in the Bye Street" he has raised common clay to a poetic level, in a manner worthy of Whitman; that in the course of the theatre he has, in "The Tragedy of Nan", given us a one-act drama which has done for English country life what Synge's "Riders to the Sea" and "The Shadow of the Glen" have done for the Aran Islands. If Shaw has builded more than he intended in "Caesar and Cleopatra", Masefield has, in "Pompey the Great", attacked the rewriting of history with as fervent a desire to apply the lessons of the past to conditions of the present.

Masefield owes his literary beginnings to Yeats. He owes much of his attitude towards art to his inspiring friendship with Synge. Outside of these men, he confesses he does not know what his literary influences are. He is impressed with certain themes, and he lays it by for years to come. The legend of "The Faithful" was pondered over for many years before he made use of it. "The Tragedy of Nan" and "The Campden Wonder" are as true reflections of the life with which, some time or other, he has come in contact, as "The Widow in the Bye Street" and "The Everlasting Mercy."

In all he does, this is a man's vision purely, but that does not prevent him from finding the exquisiteness and gentleness of a woman in his work. His love poems addressed to his wife are full of lyricism and tenderness. They are full of fervour. The scenes between *Pompey* and *Cornelia* in "Pompey the Great" are filled with a spiritual understanding which only a man of spiritual depth can comprehend. Life experiences of great moment have been ignored by Masefield; they have always been interpreted by him in spiritual terms. The only poems he has written since the outbreak of the Great War have been that very remarkable series of sonnets contained in his "Good Friday and Other Poems." One only has to read "Gallipoli" — for John Masefield has been through the Dardanelles campaign

and has followed, as an official historian, the Battle of the Somme — to detect the effect forces of war have had upon a sensitive personality. Masefield views his war impressions with a realism that is softened by poetic feeling and by a reaching vision, — that realism which bares to the bone the cruelty of the ravages of sword and fire, and which is the same realism one detects in the sheer tragedy of "Nan."

"Pompey the Great" is written with an attempt at realistic treatment. There is a tendency to colloquialism, just as Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra" has. It is treated with the reverence of one who has been impelled to write of *Pompey* in the spirit of friend and defender.

The sum total of Masefield's work tends toward tragedy, rather than toward comedy. His style, in dramatic writing, is precise, formal, experimental in its manner, which in "Pompey the Great" becomes a mannerism, where punctuation reduces itself to periods and question marks and exclamations. He was never heard to say, "I like precise things. I like the form of Racine."

As a dramatist, Masefield has figured in the English renaissance representing the history of the Court Theatre under Granville Barker's management, and in the repertory theatre under the guidance of Charles Frohman. His "The Tragedy of Nan" and his "The Campden Wonder" were in the repertory of the former. Among Frohman's ambitious schemes was to give an adequate production of "The Tragedy of Pompey the Great." His work has flourished, like Synge's and Shaw's, on the repertory idea; and thus far he has done for the English stage what which would bring it strength rather than what would bring him material success. Much more generally has he been accepted as a poet and as a novelist.

At first, "Pompey the Great" was conceived in Masefield's mind as a one-act play; but, after he had considered the subject carefully, he found that there was too much to be stated, and so he turned to a longer drama. He had read Plutarch, and had thus first been attracted to the figure of *Pompey*. This attraction became determination when, at the end of Plutarch's Life of Pompey, he read the splendid description of the closing days of *Pompey's* life. This description may be taken as the incentive behind the drama. He went through Caesar's Civil War, Lucian's "Pharsalia", Appian's "History"; and he read biographies in the classical dictionaries. But nothing fired him more, in the determination to do justice to *Pompey*, than his reading of Mommsen, from whom he wished to vindicate the Roman Emperor. His interest in the portraits of *Pompey* on coins and medals, and in the people surrounding *Pompey* is measured by the notes which he appended to his tragedy.

"Pompey the Great" has been presented many times, once by the Stage Society, and another time by F. R. Benson, at Stratford. There is a record of an excellent performance given by students at Manchester. It has not been produced, thus far, in America. Herbert Trench, writing of the play, as viewed upon the stage, said:

Mr. Masefield does not wholly succeed, perhaps because he aims at comprehending more than his theme. Portraying hasty Romans, he has an eye for England, and on the more vulgar and blatant forms of Imperialism, on bureaucracy at Whitehall, on the Boer Wars, on the House of Lords.

Certainly, the democratic spirit which pervades this piece, and which beautifies its form and richness of imagination only make more impressive, is like the democ-

at work in the world to-day. The philosophy in it may be too contemplative for drama in the popular sense. It may be too lofty in its historical attitude, there is nobility of character which, were an actor sufficiently large to compass art, would transcend all shortcomings in action and in moving situation. Under "Caesar and Cleopatra", it is lacking in humour. In fact, Masefield, as poet and dramatist, is lacking in humour. But what saves him from austerity and unrelieved gloom are his infinite compassion and his abounding sympathy with all of human life.

THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT

By JOHN MASEFIELD

COPYRIGHT, 1910, 1914,
By JOHN MASEFIELD.

Reprinted by permission of Mr. Masefield's publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York, from "The Tragedy of Pompey the Great."

TO
MY WIFE

ARGUMENT

IN the years 50 and 49 B.C., Cneius Pompeius Magnus, the head of the patrician party, contested with C. Julius Cæsar, the popular leader, for supreme power of the State. Their jealousy led to the troubles of the Civil War, in which, after many battles, Cneius Pompeius Magnus was miserably killed.

ACT I. The determination of Pompeius to fight with his rival, then marching upon Rome.

ACT II. The triumph of Pompey's generalship at Dyrrachium. His overthrow by the generals of his staff. His defeat at Pharsalia.

ACT III. The death of that great ruler on the seashore of Pelusium in Egypt.

PERSONS

STIA.
 IP.
 te-Girl.
 ELIA.
 ..
 AECILIUS METELLUS PIUS SCIPIO.
 US POMPEIUS MAGNUS (called Pompey the Great).
 US POMPEIUS THEOPHANES.
 US PORCIUS CATO.
 ulish Lancer.
 US DOMITIUS AHENOBARBUS.
 A, a Centurion.
 US ACILIUS GLABRIO.
 JS LUCCEIUS.
 JS AFRANIUS.
 IUS LENTULUS SPINTHER.
 p-Captain.
 p-Boy.
 te.
 atswain.
 LAS EGYPTIAN.
 JS SEPTIMIUS.
 rions, Sentries, Soldiers, Trumpeters, Sailors.

SCENE.		TIME.
I.	Rome.	January A.U.C. 705 (B.C. 50).
II.	{ Dyrrachium.	July A.U.C. 706.
	{ Pharsalia.	August A.U.C. 709 (June, B.C. 48).
III.	Pelusium.	September A.U.C. 706 (Aug. B.C. 48).

THE CAST FOR THE STAGE SOCIETY PRODUCTION

December, 1910

ANTISTIA	Miss Adeline Bow
PHILIP	Mr. Jules Shaw
CORNELIA	Miss Jean Sterling
JULIA	Miss Isabel Ohme
Q. CÆCILIUS METELLUS PIUS SCIPIO	Mr. Lawrence Har
CNEIUS POMPEIUS MAGNUS	Mr. Herbert Green
CNEIUS POMPEIUS THEOPHANES	Mr. Tripp Edgar
MARCUS PORCIUS CATO	Mr. A. S. Homew
A GAULISH LANCER	Mr. H. Lawrence
LUCIUS DOMITIUS AHENOBARBUS	Mr. Grendon Bent
PUBLIUS LENTULUS SPINTHER	Mr. R. Hutton
ORDERLY	Mr. E. Cresfan
COTTA	Mr. Guy Rathbon
MARCUS ACILIUS GLABRIO	Mr. Ewan Brook
LUCIUS LUCCEIUS	Mr. Alfred A. Har
SECOND CENTURION	Mr. Rathmell Wil
THIRD CENTURION	Mr. Charles Bisho
FOURTH CENTURION	Mr. Tom Ronald
CHANTYMAN	Mr. Rathmell Wil
FIRST SAILOR	Mr. Charles Bisho
SECOND SAILOR	Mr. Tom Ronald
A MATE	Mr. H. Lawrence
A SHIP-CAPTAIN	Mr. Edmund Gurr
A SHIP-BOY	Master Philip Ton
ACHILLAS	Mr. Alfred A. Har
LUCIUS SEPTIMIUS	Mr. E. Cresfan

THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT

ACT I

m in POMPEY's house near Rome. Walls hung with draperies of a dark hue. Doors curtained. Balcony, open, showing distant lights. A gong and mallet. Wine, glasses, etc. Tapers in a casket. Lamps. Without as troops pass. ANTISTIA alone, lighting lamps with a taper.

ANTISTIA [*looking towards the window*].
soldiers. Blow your horns.
and your colours, ensign. Your
s'll be dust the sooner. Your
will be in the wind, a little noise
e night. That's what you come
ddiers. Dust, and a noise in the
Dust, and the window rattling.
ore flags and horns then. [*Light-*
the last lamp] I wish I knew the
of it. [*Settling books on table*]
a Philip would come.

VOICE [*without, in the balcony*].
ey.

ANTISTIA. What was that?

THE VOICE. Pompey.

ANTISTIA [*frightened*]. Who calls
ey?

THE VOICE. Not so loud. Not so
Pompey.

ANTISTIA. What is it? What d' you
with Pompey?

THE VOICE. Philip must tell Pom-
t once.

ANTISTIA. What must he tell him?

THE VOICE. To stamp his foot at

ANTISTIA. To stamp his foot at

THE VOICE [*amid laughter*]. Stamp
foot, Pompey. Aha! Ha! Pom-

ANTISTIA [*going to the window*]. What's
Who are you?

THE VOICE [*going*]. Aha! Pompey.
your feet, Pompey.

ANTISTIA [*going to a door, scared*].
Philip.

PHILIP [*putting down tray*]. What's
the matter? What's happened?

ANTISTIA. There was a voice. A
voice. Something at the window. Jeer-
ing Pompey.

PHILIP [*opening window*]. Come out
of that. There's no one there now.
Was it a man?

ANTISTIA. There was no one. It
had a man's voice. It spoke. It
laughed.

PHILIP. It's gone. It's gone, my
dear. Don't. Don't. It's gone.

ANTISTIA. They say that the dead
come back. To cry in the night
[*pause*] whenever bad times are com-
ing. Dead men's souls. They want
blood. Licking. Licking blood in
the night. Whenever Rome's in dan-
ger.

PHILIP. Hush. Hush. Don't talk
such things. It gives them life. What
was it saying?

THE VOICE. Stamp your foot, Pom-
pey. Stamp your foot, Pompey.

ANTISTIA. Ah!

PHILIP [*exorcising at window, with
things from tray*]. Wine for blood.
[*Pours wine*] Bread for flesh. [*Breaks
bread*] Salt for life. [*Flings salt*] A
cloak of blue on Rome. A net of gold
over this house. To the desert. To
the night without stars. To the wastes
of the sea. To the two-forked flame.
[*Returning heavily*] God save my dear
master, Pompey. I fear there's trouble
coming.

ANTISTIA [*hysterically*]. Ah! Ah!

PHILIP [*pouring water*]. Drink this.
Drink this. I'll fetch another glass.

ANTISTIA [*hysterically*]. Not off that
tray. Not off that tray.

PHILIP. There. There. God save
us! Why, Antistia, they've no power.

ANTISTIA. I see the marching of
armies. Dust. Dust. That is what
the trumpets mean. War. Civil War.

Pompey and Cæsar. Like eagles struggling.

PHILIP. No. No. Don't say that. You bring things to pass.

ANTISTIA. What else could it mean? What did it mean?

PHILIP [*distractedly*]. I don't rightly know what it said.

ANTISTIA. About stamping? About Pompey stamping?

PHILIP. Pompey said it. In the Senate yesterday. Reports came in. There was a panic. The Senators were at their wits' ends. News came that Cæsar was marching on Rome. They asked Pompey if he had an army. If he could defend them.

ANTISTIA. Is Cæsar coming?

PHILIP. It was one of these wild rumours.

ANTISTIA. What did Pompey say?

PHILIP. He said if he stamped his foot, soldiers would spring up all over Italy. Armies of soldiers. To drive Cæsar back into Gaul.

ANTISTIA. And now he must stamp his foot. Cæsar's on the road with his army.

PHILIP. It's time for the house to shake when the door-posts quarrel.

[*Pausing at distant tumult*]

ANTISTIA. They're proud ones, to set the world on fire so as one of them may warm his hands.

PHILIP. Pompey's only defending the State. He thinks he's a great one, Cæsar does, now that he's conquered Gaul. What are the Gauls? The Gauls are naked heathen, with copper swords like the savages. Why, Cæsar would never have been anybody if Pompey hadn't backed him.

ANTISTIA. That's reason enough for him to fight Pompey now.

PHILIP. Pompey made him what he is. Pompey got him his place in Gaul. He was no one before that. [*Pause*] And now he hopes to put Pompey down. So he can rule Rome instead. Put my master Pompey down.

ANTISTIA. I suppose Cæsar couldn't beat Pompey, Philip?

PHILIP. Antistia. [*Solemnly*] Don't you talk like that, Antistia. I believe wherever Pompey goes, there goes a god in front of him. Like fire. It's that makes him what he is. Oh, my dear beloved master. I'm that drove mad, I can't hardly talk of it. That he should have a civil war with Cæsar. And him only newly married.

ANTISTIA. It was a civil war first made Pompey famous, Philip.

PHILIP. He was with Sulla, Marius. In the civil wars then ever since then he's gone on. I though a god went before him, ing a road for him. You won't see nothing but dangers all round Pompey would ride up. And [*in his hand*] puff. They'd fade. go. [*Pause*] I've seen all Rome the roofs to see my master, Pompey's Triumph? There were horns but you couldn't hear. And forty marching barefoot in the streets. I've seen him grow to be the greatest in the world.

ANTISTIA. Eh? The greatest in the world. And all through with Sulla in the civil war. Suppose he were not great, Philip. Only a clay statue. A statue propped on sticks. A clay thing, gilded, gnawing at it. The wind shaking. The sun cracking it. [*Pause*] Dead men, Philip. Dead men lying neath it in the dust, fumbling at it, bring it down.

PHILIP. Antistia.

ANTISTIA. Time brings all they say. You spoke of Sulla, I was a little girl then, when I and Sulla fought. My father was a centurion under Marius. I never you that. What do you know of Philip, except that I'm to marry him? I was in the street outside our house and some men came across the way. They patted my head and asked my father was upstairs. I said yes, and they went in and brought out. Out to the door in the sun. Boys gathered to watch. I ran to show him, Philip, to show him my doll. One of the men said, "We'll give Marius." He was behind my father. He swung his arm right back like to give his sword a sweep. He knelt my dada down with a great hand on the neck, and they all stabbed him. He fell. One of the men said, "Thank your dada, little girl; run and tell your mother." And then one of the men knelt down and stole his sandals. Another snatched my doll away. Time brings all about, Philip. All that's spilt then by Pompey and Sulla. They are coming out of the night. Out of Spain. Out of Rome. Out of the darkness. Souls have power, Philip, even in the darkness, when the time comes.

LIP [awed]. What time?

ANTISTIA. Pompey's time. There. It's beginning.

[Noise of a tumult. The horns of Soldiers]

LIP [at window]. Some of Rome are by burning. Pray God the wife's safe. [Pause] We shall have off our marriage, Antistia.

ANTISTIA. Why, thus it is. We must put off till youth's gone, and youth's gone, and beauty's gone. Two dry sticks mumble by the fire, wondering what there was in when the sap ran.

LIP. I must be with my master, Antistia.

ANTISTIA. Your master. When you see a dry old hag, Philip, you'll remember these arms that lay wide on the bed, waiting, empty. Years. I remember this beauty. All this time. That would have borne you but for your master. [A noise quite off] Your mistress too, perhaps. Here she comes. Here comes my young wife, that will have little joy of a man. She with her lute girl, singing a march for her. Here she comes. Open the door.

LIP. Our mistress.

[Enter CORNELIA and JULIA. The women want place chairs for the ladies]

CORNELIA. That will do, Antistia. You may go.

[Exit ANTISTIA]
JULIA. But tell me. What's going on? Is Cæsar really going to leave your husband, or is it only a feint to get your husband out of Rome?

CORNELIA. I don't know what to think. Julia. He's a danger. He's a great power with the mob. He's got his army in Gaul. Of course, a very great menace.

JULIA. But what are his plans? Does he want?

CORNELIA. He wants to rule Rome. He wants to be elected Consul. He is in Gaul there, thinking, I think, to get every one into electing him. I wish you could make your husband put down all this rioting.

[Noise without]

CORNELIA [going to the window]. My father would come in, Julia, anxious. What has the Senate decided?

[She walks up and down]

JULIA. That Cæsar must dismiss his

army. I don't think it's anything to make you anxious. How is your father? What does he think?

CORNELIA. He thinks that my husband ought to put Cæsar down with a strong hand.

A VOICE WITHOUT. Present arms.

CORNELIA. Who's that? Come in.

[The door is shaken and opened violently]

[Enter her father, METELLUS SCIPIO]

Father.

JULIA. We were just talking about you.

METELLUS. Where's your husband? Is he here? Has he been here?

CORNELIA. No, father. What is it?

METELLUS. Still at the House? He must have had my note. Has he sent round to you?

CORNELIA. No. What has happened?

METELLUS. I must talk to you, Cornelia.

JULIA [rising]. Good-bye, dear.

METELLUS. No. No, Cornelia. She mustn't go. You'll have to sleep here, my dear girl. The streets aren't safe to-night. Sit down. Please sit down. We're all in the same boat. [Pause] Cornelia. What's your husband going to do?

CORNELIA. Father. But I don't know. He tells me nothing. Nothing at least that is not common knowledge.

METELLUS. I've had letters. Cæsar's advancing into Italy. With all his army.

CORNELIA. To fight us? To attack Rome?

METELLUS. Yes. It's what I always feared. But I never thought the man would be such a blackguard.

CORNELIA. Does my husband know of this?

METELLUS. Yes. I sent word to him at the Senate to meet me here. I had to ride out to the camp. Cornelia. I don't understand your husband. My dear girl, he's been playing with the situation. I don't think you understand even now. It means that the whole of Rome is being handed over to a political brigand. All the governing classes, the religion of our fathers, all that has made Rome great. This cut-throat is marching to destroy it. Something happened at the camp.

CORNELIA. What, father?

METELLUS. The men. The soldiers. Roman soldiers. Men who had eaten the bread and salt. They refused duty. Romans. Bribed to that. By this upstart, Cæsar.

CORNELIA. They will stand and see Rome sacked by this outlaw.

METELLUS. I must see your husband. He's played with us. He must save us.

CORNELIA. There. There. He's coming. There's the sentry.

A VOICE WITHOUT. Attention. Eyes right.

METELLUS. Thank God.

A VOICE WITHOUT. Present arms.

CRIES. Hail! Pompey. Imperator.

[A trumpet blows a flourish]

A VOICE WITHOUT. Company. By the right. Quick. March.

[PHILIP enters, opening doors wide, saluting, showing the fasces lining the door. Enter POMPEY. He carries a despatch box. METELLUS salutes]

[Exit PHILIP. Doors shut]

POMPEY. Ah, Julia. Ah, Cornelia. [He goes to her, and looks into her eyes] Ah, beloved. [Slowly] There will be always peace for me, in that calm soul. [Turning wearily] I think that Sertorius was right, Julia.

JULIA. Why?

POMPEY. In our long Spanish wars, he planned to steal away to the Fortunate Islands. He could be quiet a little there. [He goes to table dejectedly]

METELLUS. You got my note?

POMPEY. Yes. Yes.

[He sits like one stunned]

METELLUS. Man. What are you going to do? Cæsar's marching on Rome with forty thousand men.

CORNELIA. But you can check him. You must.

METELLUS. Do you understand? The whole — Does the Senate know?

POMPEY [opening his despatch box]. Sit down, dear. [To CORNELIA] Sit down. The Senate knows. There were seven hundred of us in the Senate. Seven hundred of the best men in Rome, sitting there, at sunset, waiting. I had to stand up, among them. I had to tell them that one who — that a man whom I — a man very dear to me — was marching. With an army. Against this Rome. To destroy all that that great house, in generations of honour,

has built up here, of virtue, of freedom, to the wonder of the

METELLUS. Yes. Go on. Go

CORNELIA. What are they going to do?

POMPEY. Many there were to pay of — that man.

METELLUS. How did they take it?

POMPEY. They were silent. A murmur ran through the house. They moved in their chairs. Even those glad were awed. [Pause] Then a man who owes his bread to me is in Cæsar's pay now. Rose up. To ask me what troops I had for the defence of Rome.

METELLUS. Yes. And you, guardian of Rome, what troops had you?

POMPEY. I said that with the legions sent back from Gaul, and those reserves called up from the country, I might have thirty thousand men.

METELLUS. What is all that of you might have? Those two are in Cæsar's pay. They're in at the camp. They're drawn up. Ranged under the eagles. The colonels are Cæsar's, body and soul. They refuse to move. As for you, you serve, they're with the people. All for Cæsar. They came crowded of their tents crying, Peace! They won't fight. You've mocked us. You've tricked us. You've betrayed Rome.

POMPEY. So they said in the

METELLUS. Why did you not prepare for this? You've had more time which to prepare?

POMPEY. I have prepared. Metellus. But I did not expect. I thought that a noble act would be remembered, for more than twenty years. I thought that this Rome would be more to a man than a lust for power. And old friendship, I thought some

METELLUS. I've no patience with you. [He sits with twitching hands] [Starting up] Well. We know you haven't done. At least tell me what you have done.

POMPEY. Yes. I'll tell you, Metellus. [Pause] When this began between us, I thought of my own name under Sulla. I'd carried the army into Africa. I was a young man. I did rash things. But I was young. I conquered Africa. Sulla sent me then to disband my army

[To JULIA and CORNELIA]
I resented Sulla's order. My
s resented it. They asked me to
r King in Africa. I obeyed Sulla.
ght — if I did — it might be
— for the next young conqueror
bey, too. Not to cause civil war.
NELIA. He thought — we both
t, father, that Cæsar would re-
r that. We had planned how all
rty, all the Senate even, should
into the fields to welcome Cæsar.
la welcomed my husband then.
came home alone. Disbanding
my. That would have been a
h for Cæsar greater than any
ship. But Cæsar only thinks
sent power. He would see the
of Rome pass rather than not see

POMPEY. I did not think that Cæsar
be blind to the glory of Rome
to the window].

METELLUS. I'll quote some other
to you. Something which you
nce in Sicily. "What is all this
law," you said, "to us that have
s by our sides?" What? You
ber those words? Will you sit
and see Rome sacked? See the
make beastly all that seven
ies has made here? See their
hands laid — laid on these deli-
adies? See our temples spoiled
their rat-faced brats may grow
eat free bread, and loaf and spit
e the beer-shops. Pah! What
e Senate say?

POMPEY. They gave me absolute
here.

METELLUS. What? Then send out
ress. Bill every able-bodied man.
e women if the men won't come.

POMPEY. No, Metellus. Not that.

METELLUS. What then, man?

[CORNELIA interposes. *Speaking to her husband*]

NELIA. It is a question now, dear
of standing for the right. The
side is always the weaker side.
terrible. It's such a loathsome
spiritual death. But it is better
e war, than to see law set aside.
All of Rome must not be slighted.
mean the popular cry. That is
Cæsar now, dear. It was all for
ace. It will be again. I mean
burning thought of so many
ions of our fathers. That must
set aside for the lust of one man.
e duty of a Roman, dear heart,

to go out under the eagles to defend
that burning thought, the Will of
Rome. Even if he goes alone. And
you will not go alone. The souls of
our fathers will march with you. And
if you die, dear one, defending what
they died to make, you will die as I
would have my lover die.

POMPEY. Ah! Cornelia. You make
death hard. But it would be sweet to
die so for you. To die! To join that
Senate of the old Romans; the wise
ones. To bring them news of Rome
there. In the shadows.

CORNELIA. Saying that you come
crowned. Having played the Roman.
"Having obeyed their laws."

METELLUS [*quickly*]. Go on, girl.
Oh, move him, Cornelia. Goad him to
action: I cannot. For Rome's sake.
Move him. Get him out of this child's
mood.

POMPEY. Yes. Yes. Yes. [*Slowly*]
I shall fight Cæsar. [*Sharply*]

METELLUS. Ah! [*Excitedly*] But
at once. Give him no time to win re-
cruits by success. Give them no time
here. The rabble don't hesitate. They
don't understand a man who hesitates.
Give me all the cavalry. Look. I'll
mount six cohorts of slingers. I can
worry him with those.

POMPEY. Where's the map? [*He quickly takes map from wall*] It's the
effect here, not the beating of Cæsar.
We must stiffen the towns against him.
Show them that they'll have to back
their choice with their blood. That'll
check his advance.

METELLUS. Cæsar's quick, mind.
He marches light, and he comes a devil
of a pace. [*Musingly*]

POMPEY. You say he's got forty
thousand men? Let's see your despatch.
Who sent it? [*Taking paper*] Can you
trust this man?

METELLUS. Yes. A clever young
fellow.

POMPEY. Young? Where's he
served?

METELLUS. He was on Crassus'
staff in Parthia. In the smash.

POMPEY. I don't trust ghosts.

METELLUS. Ghosts?

POMPEY. What escapes when an
army's destroyed like Crassus'? [*Read-
ing*] Forty thousand men. Shrewd.
This is a shrewd lad, Metellus. He's
read a lot of school-books, this man.
Come. Forty thousand?

METELLUS. Yes.

POMPEY. No. It's not possible, Metellus. This is politics. Not war. He's forcing our hand. His army's miles away. He's rushing the frontier with a few picked men. The pick of his light foot, and these light Gaulish lancers. It's a bold dash to put all Rome in a panic.

METELLUS [*biting his nails*]. 'That's not what you'd have done.

POMPEY. That's how I know I'm right. [*Standing*] Take the cavalry. Get into touch with him. Harass him. Hang on to him. Worry him all the time. I'll come on with all I can get.

METELLUS. Take the gladiators.

POMPEY. No. This is a Roman question. No paid slaves shall decide Rome's fate.

METELLUS. We shall be a desperate lot without them.

CORNELIA. The Navy. Land men from the ships.

METELLUS. They can't march. This campaign is a race.

POMPEY. No. No. Look. [*Excitedly*] I'll send gallopers to the fleet at Brindisi. I'll tell them to lash north, forced rowing. They'd catch him at Pisaurum. They could cut in on his left flank. So much for the attack. The city here's the problem.

METELLUS. Damn the city here. The city's for the winner. Always.

POMPEY [*musings*]. Cæsar's got an army in occupation here already. Now to secure Rome.

METELLUS [*quickly*]. The patricians. Let the patricians form a Committee of Public Safety. They'll settle Cæsar's mobs.

CORNELIA. No. No. There'd be massacre all over Rome. All frightened men are merciless.

METELLUS. Be quiet, girl. Yes, man.

POMPEY. No. That's the wild thing the desperate man always does to make his cause more desperate. It would madden the mob against us. Our task is to win the mob.

CORNELIA. Leave Cato in command here.

METELLUS. What?

CORNELIA. Let Cato raise a force purely to defend Rome. Not a party force at all.

POMPEY. Yes, Cato. He stands outside parties. He has power over both.

METELLUS. No, I say. Power? That man with power. Bah! He re-

minds every one of grandpapa. why he's popular.

POMPEY. It's popularity wanted.

METELLUS. It's power | wanted. A few crucified mut Not Cato telling us of good King

POMPEY [*picking up the handle of his gong*]. We'll send for Cato.

METELLUS. No. No.

POMPEY. Yes.

METELLUS. Wait a minute.

POMPEY. Well?

METELLUS. We want a here.

POMPEY. We want a man everybody can trust.

METELLUS. Cato's not firm en

POMPEY. I want Rome calm intimidated.

METELLUS. I'm not going to if that man's left behind in Rome

POMPEY. Oh, don't say that. are your reasons against Cato this instance.

METELLUS. How will Cato with the mutineers in camp?

POMPEY. Ah! There. [*Pause*] We can't be hard on those poor f Try and see it as they see it. T had the choice of refusing duty ginning a civil war.

METELLUS. A soldier's first obedience.

POMPEY. Is it? I'd rather ha a man first, myself. Only very soldiers mutiny. Did you never that?

METELLUS. No. Nor you. must be made examples of.

POMPEY [*smiling*]. Come. wine, Metellus.

METELLUS [*crossly*]. This is time for wine. [*He stalks up and the room*] Suppose we're beaten. you if we're beaten you'll want than old Father Cato here. want a man to stamp out C faction. I'd stop their smiling the time Cæsar stormed Rome find few of his friends left. I'd Rome so sick with blood. By. think no more of Cæsar.

POMPEY. My God! The stree blood. In Sulla's time. That The carts drove over them.

METELLUS. That was child' to what this will be.

POMPEY. Yes. Suppose beaten. Rome stormed. No never! [*He flings the map aside*]

give up Italy rather. I will not
in Italy. Cæsar's rabble shall
have no excuse for sacking Rome.

METELLUS. What? [A pause]
Where will you fight him then? In
Spain, where your army is?

CORNELIA. Not in Spain.

METELLUS. Why not in Spain?

POMPEY. No. You know the
verb. Spain's a country where a
small army starves and a little army gets
on. I know, I've fought there.
It's far from Rome, and too near
Greece. No, Macedonia. We'll go over
with the fleet to Macedonia. There
are five good legions from Crassus'
left in Macedonia. We'll prepare
our army there.

METELLUS. Yes. But your friends
are gone. Our party here? The Senate?
The Consuls?

POMPEY. They must come with us
to Brindisi, where the fleet lies.
I'll take ship there. [Writing] I'm
writing to Domitius at Corfinium, to
come instantly with his twenty
legions. [Musing] I wonder. If he
comes, he will be invested. And he will
not, he's as obstinate as a mule. If
he marches south at once we shall have
twenty thousand. If not, we must
leave him to his fate. I must abandon
Italy.

METELLUS [slowly]. There's some-
thing in it. Yes. I wonder.

POMPEY. It's not so risky. Fight-
ing now is backing losing cards.

METELLUS. We shall lose friends.

POMPEY. We shall gain time.

METELLUS. Let's see the map.
[takes another map] I like it. Yes.
That's a good move.

POMPEY. Cæsar will attack my army
in Spain, first.

METELLUS. Afraid of its invading
dear Gaul, you mean?

POMPEY. He'll have no choice in
the matter. He's got no ships to follow.

I've got the Navy. While he's
building ships, I'll build an Army. If
he fights my generals in Spain, it will
be a year before he can follow me. We
shall have a great army by that time.

METELLUS. Yes. An army, eh?
Macedonian phalanx, eh? We'll send
a fiery sign through Macedonia.
The swordsmen of the hills will come.
From Dacia, out of Thrace. Jove,
not an army! With Egypt at your
back, too.

POMPEY. Yes. Egypt's full of my

old soldiers. We can always fall back
on King Ptolemy. [He becomes sad]
Ah, well. Ah, well.

CORNELIA. What is it?

POMPEY [quickly]. Nothing. [He
rises] I was thinking of all this king-
liness wandering in little wild Greek
towns.

CORNELIA. The kingly mind always
lives in a kingly city.

POMPEY [eagerly]. Ah! Who said
that?

CORNELIA. You said it.

POMPEY. Ah. Where's the fire that
scatters those sparks? Why doesn't it
burn in us always?

METELLUS [excitedly]. It's burning
now. Look here. Listen. Look here.
Your idea of Macedonia. Splendid!
Cæsar won't follow. [Slapping the table]
He'll be afraid. Part the world between
you. Let Cæsar keep the West. You
be King in the East. Build up another
Rome in Athens. With you in the East,
we could do what Alexander did. We
could —

POMPEY. No more ambitions, Me-
tellus. You see where ambition leads.

METELLUS [flushed]. You wait till
you see those Dacians. Big, black,
clean-limbed fellows, Julia, with swords
and steel shields. They charge like
cavalry. [He fills wine]

POMPEY. So, Macedonia.

METELLUS. Yes, Macedonia.

CORNELIA. When?

POMPEY. Now, dear.

CORNELIA. To-night?

POMPEY. It doesn't give you much
time. It will be hard for you to leave
all your pretty things behind.

CORNELIA. I was thinking about
your night's rest. Life is book and
picture to me. All that is Rome to us
comes with us.

METELLUS. Well then [rolling up
the map with a click], boot and saddle.

POMPEY. Take what men you have,
Metellus. And press post horses.
You'll want my orders though.

[He strikes the gong]

[Enter PHILIP]

PHILIP. Sir.

POMPEY. Ask Theophanes to speak
to me a moment. [Exit PHILIP]

METELLUS. That Greek writer-fel-
low. I don't know how you stand that
man.

[Enter THEOPHANES, who bows and is saluted]

POMPEY. Sit down. [He takes papers from despatch box] We're going to Macedonia. We take ship at Brindisi. These orders to our party. Have them filled in and sent round.

THEOPHANES. Yes. But you won't want them.

POMPEY. You mean that — What do you mean?

THEOPHANES. I mean, you won't want them. Cæsar's at Cremona. He's not marching on Rome. He's encamped in his own province. It was a false alarm.

ALL. What?

POMPEY. How do you know that?

THEOPHANES. Labienus has just come in. Cæsar's right-hand man. I've been talking to him. Cæsar's sending messengers with new proposals to you. He's not marching on Rome.

METELLUS. So we go on again.

POMPEY. What are the new proposals? Does he know?

THEOPHANES [shrugging his shoulders]. His men are beginning to shrink, I suppose, now that it comes to the touch. I don't blame 'em.

JULIA. Do you think it's an excuse to gain time?

CORNELIA. Ah, no, Julia. Let us give Cæsar credit for a little nobleness.

METELLUS. Pah! He was in Catiline's conspiracy. It was proved beyond a doubt. Well, Pompey. What are you going to do?

POMPEY. It is very wonderful. I must see Cato. [Going]

METELLUS. The lath and plaster Spartan. Why?

THEOPHANES. He's here.

[CATO, in black robes, enters. He stands with arms folded, looking at them all]

METELLUS. Well, sir?

POMPEY. Yes, Cato?

CORNELIA. You've heard? Won't you sit down?

CATO. So this is the family party. Well, Pompey. Now I see the drags that hinder your honesty. [To JULIA] You. The critic. You with neither art nor brain. Thinking you show both by condemning them in others.

JULIA. Do you show art and brain by condemning me?

CATO. Look into your heart, w
[To METELLUS] You, sir. General. A tailor and a love made you a General. Not war. doesn't make your kind. But you for war. You would shriek country into war, any day, sir that humble brave men might pickings for you. Invitations. What you call love affairs. [To THEOPHANES, while METELLUS looks him up and down] I don't you, sir.

THEOPHANES. A contributor Time's waste-paper basket.

CATO. Ah! [To POMPEY] And the mischief-maker, the genius. which of us was right, Pompey?

POMPEY. You were right. I have acted more friendly than Cæsar.

CATO. You have made the mischief. Can you unmake it?

POMPEY. Can you unmake it?

CATO. I? I am going into Spain. You forget. I am Governor there.

CORNELIA. But now. In this moment of truce. Surely it can be mended?

CATO. Yes. At a price.

POMPEY. How?

CATO. You must go alone, on to Cæsar.

POMPEY. Never.

CATO. And tell him that you to save Rome from civil war. That man's pride is a little thing to me. And that so you have put by your greatness.

CORNELIA. Ah! Ah!

[She watches POMPEY's face, then turns to POMPEY]

POMPEY. No. I have been a fool here. I have been like God. Kings have come to me on their knees. Cæsar. Cæsar's. I made Cæsar stroke of my pen. No. Ah, no.

CATO. Cæsar would be shame tears, Pompey. Would not that vex content you?

POMPEY. I cannot. No, I cannot.

CATO. Not to save Rome, Pompey?

POMPEY. No. I should be a man. No. No.

CORNELIA. You would be a fool, Pompey, for all time. All the light of the world would be kindled at your nobleness.

POMPEY. You wish it, too, heart?

CORNELIA [softly]. I wish it.

POMPEY [looking round]. To a young man?

1. Whom I have made. Oh, Cato, o! Is kindness to a friend only a form of suicide? *[He fumbles at clasp of his purple]* Very well, I will Marcus.

[He slings his purple aside]

CATO. I thought you were Pompey Little. I wronged you.

TELLUS. *[To THEOPHANES]* So.

[They exchange glances]

POMPEY. Old man. Old man.

[A noise without. Cries. A sentry calls "Halt." Struggling. Shouts of "Stand back." "Let me in." The spears rattle. The door is shaken]

THEOPHANES *[opening door]*. What's ? *[Pause]* Let him in, Sentry.

er filthy HORSEMAN, dust to the eyes, tottering. The door is left open, showing SOLDIERS]

TELLUS. One of Cæsar's lancers.

THEOPHANES. A deserter, eh?

HE MAN *[gasping]*. Which of you e lord?

POMPEY *[pouring wine for him]*. I am Drink this. Take your time. at is it?

HE MAN *[spilling his drink like a half dead of thirst]*. Cæsar! Cæsar! aped last night. Cæsar!

CORNELIA. What?

HE MAN. He's crossed the Rubi- With all his army. Marching on e. Be here in two days.

[A pause]

POMPEY *[resuming his purple]*. That les it. There can be no treaty now.

CORNELIA. So war has begun.

POMPEY *[sadly]*. There it is. Only it ore terrible now. More terrible a it was. *[Turning to go]* It must ar now to the end.

TELLUS *[picking up the orders n the table and slapping them to com- d attention]*. And now. To Brin-

[He walks briskly towards the door, alts opposite CATO, at whom he glares.]

PEY and CORNELIA halt to watch

Well, sir. My Conscript Father. ou crawl before Cæsar now, sir? ong since a Roman bade his King ck the dust before a traitor. You our kind may sue to such. Rome other thoughts into our hearts.

CATO. There are two Romes, Me- s. One built of brick by hods-men. the Rome I serve glimmers in the ted heart. It is a court for the

calm gods. That Rome. Let me not shame that city. Advance the eagles.

A VOICE WITHOUT. Present arms.

[A trumpet blows a blast]

[Curtain]

ACT II

SCENE FIRST. — *Staff-officer's tent at Durazzo. Walls of plain canvas. Canvas door running on rings at back. Smaller canvas door at back. Table and camp-chairs. Everything bare and severe. DOMITIUS, LENTULUS, THEOPHANES, at the table.*

DOMITIUS. So it goes on. And Spain is lost. Look at this position here. Cæsar has shut us in here like so many sheep in a pen. Has Pompey no pride? Or has he grown besotted?

THEOPHANES. Flaccus is raiding Cæsar's lines this morning. He will attack them in three places. And break them.

DOMITIUS *[fiercely]*. Flaccus is a boy. A whole year wasted, and half the empire lost.

[Enter POMPEY hurriedly. They salute]

POMPEY. Good morning. I have called you all together to tell you of the loss of my Spanish army, lately commanded by Afranius. We had expected victory, from Afranius' letters. But we are soldiers. We know what Fortune is in war. We are not merchants, to cast him for failing.

DOMITIUS. We have given up Italy, and thrown away Spain. Africa is invaded and Sicily taken. We have given up and drawn back everywhere. And why? That we might come here to be cooped up by an army half our size. I want to know why? We all want to know why.

POMPEY. I remember Sulla saying that he could make an army love him by talking to the privates occasionally. But that no amount of talking would make his generals love his ideas. Be content. And bide my time.

LENTULUS. Magnus. I am not given to criticism; but this biding time is ruin. We are losing allies; we are losing Rome. Rome looked to you to crush this upstart. Instead of that you

have let a rebellion grow into a civil war. You have watched your adherents stamped out piecemeal. You have done nothing.

POMPEY. Wait.

DOMITIUS. We have waited for a year.

POMPEY. I ask you to wait a little longer.

LENTULUS. Magnus, while we wait, the rabble is stamping out aristocracy throughout the world. *[He rises]*

POMPEY. Sit down, Lentulus. I tell you to wait. The war is in my hands.

DOMITIUS. War is in the hands of the man who strikes. *[He thrusts aside the lesser door]* There. Among the crags there. By the pine-clump. In that great red heap like an iron mine. That is Cæsar's camp. I've been out there night after night, worming over rocks and down gullies, keeping my course by the stars, so that, when a chance came, I could take an army into that camp blindfold. I've a map here. *[Throws down a paper]* Those red dots are the sentries. Each dot was made at the risk of my heart's blood. I've grovelled in the earth before all those sentries, praying for the moon to go in, while they talked of their love-affairs. I've seen the sergeant coming his rounds with a lantern, and shut my eyes lest they should gleam, and betray me. I could take that camp with two legions in the blackest night of the year. This war is breaking the world in two. And you send Flaccus with a corporal's guard to pull down a hundred yards of paling. Justify that, before you tell me to wait.

POMPEY. Flaccus is fighting the decisive battle of the war.

LENTULUS. This is trifling.

[He rises and moves away]

DOMITIUS. The decisive. I will tell you what a decisive battle is. I took part in one for you at Massilia three months ago. At the end of that siege, there was no city. There were no people. Only some deathsheds dying of plague, and a few madmen on the walls. And outside, there were towers flinging fires at us, and slings flinging rocks at us, and miles of army coming up to the sack. That was a decisive battle.

POMPEY. Domitius, when a man thinks fixedly of anything, desiring it with his whole nature, he creates a strong pitiless devil.

Domitius, you are given up to a devil of lust for battle. You fiercer than a devil, for when there is no enemy you fight your friends, when there are no friends you fight yourself. And when you have yourself bloody you fight ideas, because you understand them, and not them, but because when you are fighting you are nothing. I fear Domitius. A man's friends are those who understand his ideas, and advise them. You are Cæsar's friend, Domitius.

DOMITIUS *[intensely]*. You killed my brother, when you were a young man. For that, I swore to tear your life out. You dined with me once, twenty years ago. You will not remember I put my hand upon your shoulder. I had a knife in my other hand. I could have stabbed you to the heart. And you would have died, Magnus, before my old Marian friends. But I saw you were a better man than my brother. Something you said. I saw that was what Rome wanted. *[Pompey]*

[Fiercely] You know better than I call me Cæsar's friend. I've seen Cæsar rock in his seat.

POMPEY. You are Cæsar's friend. Your heart beats pulse for pulse with Cæsar's heart. You malign me because my hands are not red from butchery like his. And at this moment, while you malign me, Flaccus is ending the war. Take no more thought of the war. The war is over.

[The GENERALS draw to one side and talk apart for a moment]

POMPEY. Rome is the problem. You would do well to think of Rome. This is the seventh democratic revolution since my boyhood. Seven desperate attempts to change in fifty years. Does that teach you nothing?

LENTULUS. Theophanes.

DOMITIUS. Yes.

THEOPHANES. Magnus.

POMPEY. I offered a broken Italy to a distracted Italy. He took it. A broken, useless Spain. He took it. I have flung down half a useless world and he has gorged it and come on to the trap. I am camped in plenty, six fleets ruling the seas. Cæsar is entrenched in mud, living on roots, besieging me, you call it? He has thirty miles of works. He has enough men to guard ten miles. His men are exhausted and starving.

ys in those works during my pleas-
; no longer. He cannot force me
battle. He cannot raid my lines.
cannot go back to Rome.
and I, with one slight thrust, am
abling him into ruin.

ter an ORDERLY with a despatch.
He gives it to POMPEY]

ENTULUS. From Flaccus?

OMITIUS. You are of the Fifth?

ORDERLY. From Titus Pulcio, my
l.

POMPEY. Very well.

ORDERLY. Have you any orders,
lord?

POMPEY. No orders. Acknowledge.

[Exit ORDERLY, saluting]

HEOPHANES. Is it important?

POMPEY. Read it.

HEOPHANES [reading]. From Titus
cio, legate, fifth legion, to Head-
arters: "The attack under Valerius
ecus has been repulsed with heavy
l. The survivors have fallen back
n the old works, south of the river,
ere desperate fighting is now going
I am marching with what I have.
e enemy is in force. Stragglers re-
osition hopeless."

OMITIUS. These thrusting youths
at a lesson. Now, Magnus. Justify
r plan, now.

POMPEY. Wait.

ENTULUS. Wait? While our right
k is being rolled up? [Coldly]

POMPEY. It would take Cæsar two
s to bring up enough troops to
sh our right.

OMITIUS. Surely you will smash
s attacking force.

POMPEY. I am fighting with the
ught of Rome before me. I will
march back to Rome over corpses,
he Sulla fashion.

OMITIUS. At least you will march
k over those whom we took last
ht. I killed those.

POMPEY. You killed those men?

OMITIUS. They were rebels, I tell
t. Traitors.

POMPEY. I will judge traitors.

OMITIUS. They were my own de-
ers. Dogs. I will serve all traitors
And I tell you this.

POMPEY. Not a word. You dis-
e our cause, Domitius. [Pause,
change of voice] I may win this

. Or this [showing his gold eagle-
b] may pay a camp-trull yonder.

But whether I win or go down, my men
shall bear themselves nobly. Those on
my side must act like knights of the
bodyguard of God. See to it.

[Enter CHIEF CENTURION COTTA,
battered]

COTTA. I report the death of com-
mander Flaccus, my lord.

POMPEY. Killed?

COTTA. Yes, my lord.

OMITIUS. That is what happens in
skirmishing. Nothing is done, and the
good man gets killed.

COTTA. We were beaten back, my
lord; the surprise failed.

POMPEY. Yes? Well?

COTTA. We rushed their wall, tore
up their palisades, and set fire to two
of the turrets. Then they surrounded
us. I should think they had two
legions on to us. We had to cut our
way home.

POMPEY. And your commander?

COTTA. He was killed in the thick,
my lord. After our storm, we were
driven back on to the palisades. The
pales were all on fire, all along the line
burning hard. I looked one minute,
and saw him backed right up against
the flames, with a dozen Thracians.
They had a whole troop of lancers stab-
bing at them. I got within a few paces
of him, trying to bring him off, but the
fire balls burst so thick one couldn't
see. My men were being cut to pieces,
the cavalry was cutting in on our rear,
and there came a rush of spearmen
which swept me off the rampart. I
saw his body falling back into the fire,
all lit up. But we could never get near
the place again. They cut us to pieces
down on the flat. They killed eight
hundred of us.

LENTULUS. A severe repulse.

OMITIUS. Wasted. Wasted lives.
Utterly useless, wicked waste.

POMPEY. And then? What hap-
pened then?

COTTA. They drove us back into
the old works by the river. Over the
outer wall into the ditch. [Pause] We
were penned up in the ditch like beasts
in a slaughter-house. They swarmed up
above us on the wall, pelting us. We
were below them, grinding in the mud,
huddled like sheep. Men will always
huddle when they have no room to use
their shields. It was so fierce, that I
thought our men would break. But we

could not break. We were shut in. We were so pushed together that the dead could not fall. And being pressed man to man gave us a kind of courage. I got up on a heap where the wall had fallen. I wanted to see. I could see all a wave of red plumes where Cæsar's Gauls were pressing up, calling to their horses. Arr. Arr. There was a roar everywhere like ice breaking up in the spring. Behind their main attack they were making a way through the wall for their horse. Every now and then their picks flashed and the earth came scattering down. It was worst at the gate. The noise of the axes on the gate was like a ship-yard. They brought up a tree to batter it, and every time they ran at it, you could see the wood give, in great splinters. I thought we were lost; but it was our fight, my lord.

For I heard fifes, playing "The Day of Zama", and men singing. It was a cohort of the fifth, marching to support our left flank. They came on slowly, in line, with their heads up, and the fifes playing. The centurions led them, singing, marching well ahead. It was a fine thing to see those men coming on. Their ranks were so locked that the oak-trees on their shields made a green breastwork across their front. It was our fight after that. We caught them in the outer ditch. The ditch is choked with them. Cæsar lost a full thousand there in the ditch. They were broken. We shook them to the heart. They will not face us again, my lord, for a long time. Nor any enemy. Cæsar will have trouble with them.

POMPEY. Very well, Cotta.

COTTA. They are sending in the body with a trumpet, my lord.

POMPEY. Yes! Send me the returns of killed and wounded and the centurions' reports. Your legion will stand no watch to-night. See that your men rest. Order wine from the sutlers for them. I will speak to them to-night.

COTTA. Thank you, my lord.

[He goes out, saluting]

DOMITIUS. One moment, Cotta.

[He goes out, after him]

THEOPHANES. Cæsar is sending a trumpet. Can he be suing for peace?

LENTULUS. Why should he sue for peace after a skirmish?

POMPEY. It was the pricking of a bubble. He is suing for peace. And if I grant peace, I shall have these to

fight. And if I refuse peace, this will go on.

THEOPHANES. Do we receive trumpet?

[Enter DOMITIUS]

DOMITIUS. Magnus. Cæsar disorder. His men are leaving trenches. He is withdrawing. south walls are abandoned already.

POMPEY. Yes. He has learned lesson.

He must pay them now for the they have spent for him. He cannot pay them. The most that he can is to save them from the result of insanity.

THEOPHANES. He can retreat.

POMPEY. How can he retreat? cannot retreat. Where can he? My navies hold the sea. To the there are savage tribes. The south blocked by my garrisons. I am in the west with my army. And the east lies Metellus, with an army.

He has one chance of saving himself. He can sue for peace.

DOMITIUS. You are not going to receive this herald?

POMPEY. Yes. Rome must have peace.

If Cæsar will make submission -

DOMITIUS. A surrender will be useless.

THEOPHANES. Cæsar must be destroyed.

LENTULUS. How will you destroy Rome, with Cæsar alive?

POMPEY. This war has gone against my life. Sulla's method failed. Cæsar's method failed. They shall be tried again. Rome shall be saved this time finally.

DOMITIUS. If you hesitate to do so now, you are a traitor, Magnus.

POMPEY. I have made my plan. *[Sternly]* I will abide by it. your place. Murmur no more.

No little gust of passion shall set me wavering.

[A VOICE without and a trumpet]

VOICE. Present arms. Port arms. Pass friend. Present arms.

POMPEY. Life is nothing. It is a way of life which is so much. I am there.

COTTA *[entering]*. The body, my lord. With the trumpet.

er BEARERS with the body of VALERIUS FLACCUS. COTTA, and the others salute the corpse. Then, with a solemnity of trumpets blowing points of ceremony, MARCUS ACILIUS enters, led by two CENTURIONS. He is blindfolded. COTTA, the BEARERS and the CENTURIONS go out, when the handkerchief is removed]

ACILIUS. I bring back your soldier, *Exit Pompey*.

POMPEY. You bring a message?

ACILIUS. I come from Cæsar.

POMPEY. Well?

ACILIUS. He asks you to end this. The gods have given you an full measure of victory. You have lost and won half the Roman world. That the world is shared between you can consent to a peace. Tomorrow, if fortune favour one of you, the fortunate one will think himself too good to parley. *[Pause]* Cæsar asks for a peace may be concluded. If you will undertake to do the same, he will make public oath to disband his army within three days. That is his proposal.

POMPEY. More than a year ago, the Senate ordered Cæsar to disband his army. That decree still stands undisturbed. I cannot treat with a rebel. Cæsar must obey that decree and submit to the Senate's mercy.

ACILIUS. The quarrel is between you and Cæsar, Magnus.

POMPEY. Not at all. I represent the Senate.

ACILIUS. Your party of the Senate, which my party does not recognise.

POMPEY. These are the facts, Acilius. Cæsar has attacked Republican rule. He has failed. I make it a condition of peace that he acknowledge Republican authority.

ACILIUS. Cæsar has never denied his authority. He is in arms against the perversion of that authority by unpunished men. That he seeks to end the Republic is denied by my presence here, asking for peace. Cæsar is no enemy to you. That great mind is its own sufficient authority. Farewell, *[Going]*

[At door] You will grant peace if I kneels in the dust. Very well. There is more to him than honour. I will kneel in the dust. In the most conspicuous place in Rome. He will submit himself, body and cause, to the judgment

ment of the Roman people there assembled.

Will that suffice?

POMPEY. No.

The mob has no voice in this matter. The mob must be taught to obey its rulers. Cæsar must submit to the Senate.

ACILIUS. Then the blood will be on your hands, Magnus. *[Going]*

POMPEY. It will suffice if Cæsar surrender to myself in the presence of both armies. But a public act of submission must be made. Otherwise it will be thought that Cæsar drove us from Italy, and forced us to accept his terms. That I cannot allow.

ACILIUS. I am to tell Cæsar that you refuse. *[Quietly]* From fear of what the world may think?

POMPEY. You count that a little thing, the thought of the world? For what else are we fighting: but to control the thought of the world? What else matters, Acilius?

You think that I am fighting to be a master? Not so. I am fighting because I know what Cæsar wants. I have watched his career step by step. Cæsar means to be king. He has bribed the rabble to crown him.

You see only the brilliant man, winning — what he has the power to win. I look beyond that man. I see Rome under a secret, bloody domination and a prey to future Cæsars. That shall not be.

I am an old man, now, Acilius. I have been fighting this battle all my life. I hope now to end it. You have heard my terms. *[He strikes a gong]*

[A pause. Enter a CENTURION]

Do you accept them or refuse them? Take your time.

[Pause]

ACILIUS. I refuse them.

POMPEY. *[To CENTURION]* You will take the Gemella legion, drive in Cæsar's outposts and burn the works. *[Exit CENTURION]*

ACILIUS. There is no voice for peace, then. I have failed. Now that my task is done, may I speak with you privately?

POMPEY. Yes. On a private matter. Is your business private?

ACILIUS. Yes. It is private.

POMPEY. *[To GENERALS]* Leave us. *[Exit GENERALS]*

[To ACILIUS] Be brief.

ACILIUS. My mother married you. Years ago. She was dragged by force from my father so that you might be propped by a vote the more. She died of a broken heart, in your bed.

You have taken worse props, now. These nobles. They are using you to stamp out democracy. So that they may plunder in peace for another fifty years.

And when you have done their task. When the war is over.

POMPEY [*taking up gong*]. I cannot listen to this.

ACILIUS. You plan to make just those democratic reforms for which Cæsar is fighting. You mean to cripple the aristocracy. And they will stop you. Domitius hates you. Metellus fears you. Lentulus is jealous of you. They are planning to get rid of you. Even now. [*Pause*]

Get rid of them, Magnus. Take Cæsar as your friend. End the war. Drive them out.

POMPEY. And after?

ACILIUS. You could make Rome what you please.

[POMPEY strikes the gong]

[*Re-enter GENERALS*]

POMPEY. And after? [*Pause*] Your party shall submit to mine. [*He writes a few words*] You may take this to Cæsar. [*Gives writing*]

Give this man safe conduct.

ACILIUS. I am going, Magnus. I shall not see you again.

[THEOPHANES goes out]

POMPEY [*who has turned away*]. Well?

ACILIUS. Pride is a mean thing in the presence of death. To-day you are great, and the kings bring tribute to you. To-morrow you may be this. Only this. Praised by the worm.

[*Showing corpse*]

POMPEY. You talk of the presence of death. Man, I am in the presence of life, and death's a pleasure to it.

[COTTA and CENTURIONS enter with

THEOPHANES. They salute]

Who cares what I may be? I may be carrion. But while I am man, and carry a faith in me, I will guard that faith. See this man through the lines.

[*With a solemn blowing of a point of ceremony, COTTA and the*

CENTURIONS go out, leaving ACILIUS, blindfolded.

[*murs. Acclamations*]

[The GENERALS eye POMPEY, walks to the body and looks

POMPEY. Poor boy. You have a long way from this inn.

When you were born, women loved you, and watched you as you slept, prayed for you, as women do. When you learned to speak, they praised you, they laughed and were so tender to you, even when they were in pain. And to-night you will wander alone where no woman's love can come to you and no voice speak to you, and no words of ours touch you to an answer.

The dead must be very lonely.

DOMITIUS [*coming forward and looking at the body*]. That? Why be so sad that? He was marked for it. [Quintus] Magnus. I have something to say. I give you full credit for what you have done. You were right. But not so right as I would have been. Destruction's what war's for. Still. It happened. Now there is Rome. Are you going back to Rome without the moral support of a victory?

LENTULUS. In Rome, it is openly that you have been shuffled off at Cæsar's will.

THEOPHANES. And that we have been beaten in every battle.

POMPEY. What is that noise, then?

[*Cries of "Victory." Clapping of Trumpets. A cry of "Peace with Arms." The spears rattle*]

[*Enter LUCIUS LUCCEIUS, in the same dress*]

LENTULUS. Lucecius.

THEOPHANES. Lucius Lucecius.

[LUCCEIUS stands looking at the body silently. He salutes the body and advances slowly]

LUCCEIUS [*slowly*]. I salute Cneius Pompey. I come from Rome.

POMPEY. What news do you bring from Rome?

LUCCEIUS. News of your triumph, Magnus.

Cæsar's army, under Curio, invaded Africa.

Curio is killed. His army is destroyed. Africa is saved to us.

[*He takes a laurel wreath*]

The Roman people send me with this wreath, Magnus.

[*He offers it, with reverent dignity*]

POMPEY [*taking the wreath and laying it on* FLACCUS' head]. Once, long ago, I lay with you. By the fish-pools at Capua, watching the gold-fish. You asked me for my purple, that I might wear day long ago. [*He lays his hand over FLACCUS*] All things for which men ask are granted. A word will be a star or a spear for all time. This is the day of my triumph, it seems. [*A distant trumpet winds. It winds again*]

THEOPHANES. There is a horn blowing.

POMPEY. It is blowing like a death-knell.

DOMITIUS. It is a Roman call.

FLACCUS. Cæsar's camp.

[DOMITIUS *flings aside the canvas*] This is the "Prepare to March." He is in retreat. His huts are burning. They are winding out upon the road. They are floundering up the hill. Two thousand horse could ruin them.

POMPEY. Ruin is not my province. Let them destroy themselves. They are wandering out into the wilds without heart, without hope, without plan. This is the forlornest march ever called a triumph. There is death in every hut there already. Well. We shall win.

FLACCUS. All the chief centurions.

[THEOPHANES *goes to the door, to the SENTRY without*]

[*going to the body*] And to-night we shall be marching from this poor earth, leaving Cæsar, marching to many tombs, under the stars, singing as we march. I shall end Sulla's war, now. We will kill the rebellion, remember, those Romans.

[*The CHIEF CENTURIONS enter*]

FLACCUS. A trumpeter there. Strike camp. Prepare to march.

[A CENTURION *going out, calls*] Take up the body.

1ST CENTURION.

This is a sacred city, built of marvellous earth.

2ND CENTURION.

It was lived nobly here to give this body to the gods.

3RD CENTURION.

Nothing was in this brain and in this eager heart.

4TH CENTURION.

He is so dumb and blind, Death cannot understand.

[*They lift the bier*]

Death drifts the brain with dust and soils the young limbs' glory.

Death makes women a dream and men a traveller's story,

Death drives the lovely soul to wander under the sky,

Death opens unknown doors. It is most grand to die.

[*They go out, followed by POMPEY*]

[*Now without comes a shaking blast from a trumpet. It is taken up and echoed by many trumpets, near and far, blowing the legionary calls, till the air rings*]

[*Curtain*]

SCENE SECOND. — *The same. Taper light. Dawn later. POMPEY writing. Enter LUCCEIUS*

LUCCEIUS. Not in bed, Magnus?

POMPEY. I have had evil dreams.

Are you from Rounds?

Is all quiet?

LUCCEIUS. Yes.

There is a light near Cæsar's camp.

They are burning their dead.

Our scouts took two lancers. They say that Cæsar's men are dying. Of fever and hunger.

POMPEY. Yes. He must surrender within a few days. And so they are burning their dead?

LUCCEIUS. Yes.

POMPEY. Now we have Rome to settle. [*Pause*]

I lie awake, thinking.

What are we, Lucceius?

LUCCEIUS. Who knows? Dust with a tragic purpose. Then an end.

POMPEY. No. But what moves us?

I saw a madman in Egypt. He was eyeless with staring at the sun. He said that ideas come out of the East, like locusts. They settle on the nations and give them life; and then pass on, dying, to the wilds, to end in some scratch on a bone, by a cave-man's fire.

I have been thinking that he was wise, perhaps. Some new swarm of ideas has been settling on Rome. A new kind of life is being born. A new spirit. I thought a year ago that it was crying out for the return of kings, and personal rule. I see now that it is only crying out for a tyrant to sweep the old life away.

Rome has changed, Lucceius. Outwardly, she is the same, still. A city

which gives prizes to a few great people. A booth where the rabble can sell their souls for bread, and their bodies for the chance of plunder. Inwardly, she is a great democratic power struggling with obsolete laws.

Rome must be settled. The crowd must have more power.

LUCCEIUS [*surprised*]. That would be a denial of your whole life, Magnus.

You have been crushing democracy for forty years.

POMPEY. I have crushed rebellions. I mean now to crush their cause.

There must be a change. A great change.

[*Enter METELLUS, DOMITIUS, LENTULUS*]

LUCCEIUS [*giving paper*]. This is my report. [*He salutes and goes. At the door he pauses, looking out*] The pyre is still burning. They must be dying like flies. [*Exit*]

METELLUS [*as the GENERALS sit facing POMPEY*]. Cæsar has sent to me privately, Magnus, to beg me to ask terms from you. I sent back his letter without comment.

The war is over; but we are not yet secure. We shall have to garrison the provinces for some years with men whom we can trust.

Spain and Gaul are arranged for among ourselves. It is the lesser appointments. Magnus, I want your voice, on behalf of Lucius Tuditanus. I was thinking of sending him as my deputy into Asia.

POMPEY. Is that the soldier Tuditanus, who did so well under you?

[*To DOMITIUS*]
DOMITIUS. No. His nephew.

METELLUS. He's a young man on my personal staff.

POMPEY. Has he qualified for the prætorship?

METELLUS. No. Not in the strict legal sense. But he was of the greatest use to me in Asia. He would be competent.

POMPEY. In what way was he of use to you?

METELLUS. In the collection of tribute, when they disputed our assessments. They hoped to wrangle in Court, without paying, till Cæsar saved them. Tuditanus stopped that. He judged the claims on the spot, and the tax was paid, or distrained, there and then. Often the patrols did not have

to unsaddle. And as we need money quickly, the system was of use to me.

POMPEY. Yes. But the law is Metellus. A prætor and a deputy represent Rome. It is his responsible office. They judge and in Rome's name. Men must be paid for it. What has Tuditanus done besides this tax-collection, that they should be broken for him?

LENTULUS. His father has many sacrifices for us.

POMPEY. There is a growing in Rome that a sacrifice should be a good investment. Anything else?

METELLUS. He is one of the most brilliant young men, of proved loyalty whom we ought to provide. I will commend him to you.

POMPEY. That is much in his favour. But I want proof that he can govern. Tell me, Metellus. Where has he shown administrative talent?

METELLUS. He has not shown it. He is a man whom we ought to know. He would soon learn. We will give him a staff of old soldiers, to begin with, at first.

POMPEY. Has he any previous command? Where has he served?

DOMITIUS. He was in the house at a time, in Lycia.

POMPEY. [*To METELLUS*] Will you commend him to you?

METELLUS. Never mind the details. I am contending for the principle. Our friends must be rewarded.

POMPEY. Yes. But prætorian rank. No. He must qualify.

LENTULUS. Before you reject him, will you not see him? Metellus says Tuditanus would not recommend himself without grave reason. I might say without urgent reason.

POMPEY. I want an independent reason. Without that, it would be a gross act of favouritism. And as for the results, we have seen the prætors. We should have a frontier war, and possibly a frontier war. Tuditanus cannot be prætor.

METELLUS. Remember, Metellus. Tuditanus is one of many. Others are in the same position. With a reasonable prospect of employment.

POMPEY. Peace will try their quality. There are men with Cæsar with whom to expect employment.

[*The GENERALS look at each other and sigh*]

DOMITIUS. There is another point. We are going back to Rome. Rome is a rebellious, unsettled state. We must secure ourselves.

ask that every man of any standing should be brought to trial, even if he has remained neutral. If the rebels have attacked authority, the neutrals must be ignored it. And both must suffer. Rebellion must be stamped out.

[Gives paper]

the four hundred men in this list have actively helped the rebellion. There can be no question of trial for them. I ask that they be put to death. POMPEY. That is out of the question. War will end when Cæsar surrenders. I cannot allow reprisals. I want Rome settled.

LENTULUS. Perhaps you will explain how you plan to administer Rome when we return.

METELLUS [softly]. There will be amnesty for offences committed?

POMPEY. Yes.

DOMITIUS. You will pardon these men?

POMPEY. If they submit.

LENTULUS [slowly]. Will you allow them to help in the reconstruction?

POMPEY [hotly]. Yes. Power is in the hands of a few. There must be a change in Rome. I would have these four hundred firebrands made Senators, and help us make the change wisely.

METELLUS. So.

DOMITIUS. Magnus. There is only one way of settling Rome. By showing that she who is master in a way which she'll remember.

LENTULUS. Any dallying with these men will leave us where we were before. Hated, and flouted by the rabble, in danger from it. Losing our privileges, one by one. Losing our sessions and our power. Magnus, would ask you to weigh this proposal carefully. It affects the future of the patrician idea.

POMPEY. And of Rome. What kind of future do you expect from a massacre of this? I will tell you what you will

You will drive these four hundred brands into the Provinces, where it will take five years of war to crush them. No. I'll go back with peace. Not a man shall be touched.

LENTULUS. Before we go back with peace, we must end the war. I have letters from Rome.

popular voice in Rome says that we

have feared to risk a battle. That the war drags on, when it could be ended in a day.

That we dare not kill these representatives of the people.

That is a dangerous spirit in a city which we are about to rule. That spirit can only be broken by decisive success. We must go back with victory. A battle is certain victory to ourselves. We ask you to give battle.

METELLUS. We have asked this before, without success. We ask it now, feeling it to be a grave need. Lentulus has mentioned it as a political expedient. I add to that this, that our treasury is nearly empty. We have no means of raising more money. We have drained Spain and Asia for years to come. And your inactive plan of campaign has killed our credit. We must fight. We cannot afford to keep the field for another month.

POMPEY. Cæsar cannot keep the field for another week.

DOMITIUS. Cæsar will drag on, day by day, till the corn is ripe. It is not many days now to harvest. You let his men get a full provision and you will see how long they will keep the field. I could break that impostor's strength with the horse alone.

POMPEY. I can break his strength without risking a life. I will not give battle. Be thankful that we can end such a war with so little bloodshed.

[The GENERALS rise]

DOMITIUS. You are the oldest, Lentulus.

LENTULUS. It may lose us votes, remember. You are the most popular.

METELLUS. Perhaps I should do it. I am related.

POMPEY. What do you wish to say?

METELLUS. Magnus. I have to speak to you.

You love power too well.

Your command ends with the war.

You have tried to prolong your command by neglecting to end the war.

But the war is over.

You plan now to retain command while you impose your will upon the State. That is a menace to the Republic. We have been forced to convolve the Senate to discuss it.

The Senate has sanctioned the appointment of Tuditanus, and the list of the proscribed. It also commands that you give battle to Cæsar.

[He gives a paper]

[POMPEY walks up stage slowly, then down. He stands at table, fronting them]

POMPEY. What do you expect me to say, Conscript Fathers? That I refuse to obey this order?

I could refuse.

If I were Cæsar, or Lentulus. Or you, Domitius, or Metellus. I should refuse.

And my soldiers, or Cæsar's there, would work my will on a Senate which had so insulted me.

But I am Pompey the Great. I am bound by my military oath.

Do not think to humble me. Death is a little thing to the loss of conscience.

Death is easier than life to me.

But even if I die, Rome will be a prey to unscrupulous men.

There is no hope for Rome. She ends here. Disaster begins.

But for me, you would now be beggars at Cæsar's doors. I saved Rome from Cæsar.

And now Rome is to beg her life from you. You have used Pompey the Great to ruin her.

But you have first to fight for her.

You shall give your sin a dignity, by risking your lives for it.

[He strikes the gong]

[Enter an AIDE]

[To AIDE] Give the signal for battle.

[Exit AIDE]

You have your will, now.

This is the end.

And at the end, think what it is which you destroy.

Rome is nothing to you. Only the reward of greed, and hate, and pride.

The city where justice was born.

Look beyond your passions, at what Rome is. It is the state of Rome, not passion, which concerns us now.

A little while ago she was a market-town, governed by farmers. Now she rules Europe.

And in herself no change. Cramped still. Fettered. The same laws. The same rulers. Like iron on her heart.

And forty years of civil war. All my life. A blind turbulent heaving towards freedom.

[Without, a confused noise, as of many men stirring from sleep. Shouted orders are clearly heard above the murmur]

THE ORDERS. Fall in. Dress. Cohort. By the right. Cohort, to the left,

wheel. Eyes left. Cohort. Three paces to the — Attention, etc., Cohort. Salute, etc.

[In a moment's silence a trumpet blows outside the tent. The

POMPEY. Five minutes ago I Rome's future in my hand. She wax to my seal. I was going her.

Now is the time to free her. You tear the scales and the chains from You can make her a State so spl that Athens would be a dust-her her.

You will not.

You will drive her back three turies, so that you may wreak passions on her.

Go on, then. Destroy her. destroyed.

Whether you win or lose, Rome

[A pause. Orders wi

ORDERS. The cohorts will ad in — Cohort, halt. Ground Attention. Form four deep. A tion. By the right. Quick m Cohort. Cohort. To the left. Tu

DOMITIUS. What orders have y

[For the next minute or two a of troops moving]

POMPEY. You have fought this many times in your hearts. [He the doors wide, showing a bright Now you will fight it in earnest. will fight the wild beasts whom I have starved like beasts.

Go to your divisions.

[The GENERALS go out sil

POMPEY stands by the tabl

ORDERS. Cohort. Halt. Gr arms. Attention. Form four Cohort. Left turn.

[Enter PHILIP. POMPEY doe look at him. Fifes of a pass]

PHILIP. Do you want me, my POMPEY [turning]. Can you Philip?

PHILIP. Sing, my lord?

POMPEY. Yes.

PHILIP. I don't know, my lord

POMPEY. What was that son had? That night. In the Asian When we broke Mithridates?

PHILIP [hesitating]. I don't whether I can, my lord.

POMPEY. Sing.

PHILIP. I'll try, my lord.

[He re

ugh we are ringed with spears, though
the last hope is gone,
ans stand firm, the Roman dead look on.
re our sparks of life blow back to him
who gave,
n clear, brave hearts, and light our path-
way to the grave.

OMPEY. Take my purple, Philip.
[He flings his purple aside]
CENTURION. Eyes left. Salute.
COHORT PASSING. Hail! Pompey.
erator. [Trumpets]

[Curtain]

ACT III

Poop of a Lesbian Merchantman of the First Century B.C.

each side, the bulwark of a ship, painted green. There are gaps, or gangways, in these bulwarks, so that people may go down the ship's side into boats.

ack of stage, the poop-rail, also painted green. A wooden belfry with a bell stands upon the middle of the poop-rail.

each side of the bell is a ladder leading down to the main deck. Gaps in the poop-rail allow people to reach the poop by these ladders.

re the deck, sloping from amidships like a tent, is an awning of blue and white bafstas. This awning has a flap, which falls at back of stage, hiding the poop from the main deck. On both sides of the stage the awning is secured by stops to guys above the ship's bulwarks.

the centre of the stage (if the theatre stage is so built) is a hatchway, surrounded by a raised white rim or coaming. This leads down to the cabins.

nd it is a mast (painted "mast colour") which rises up through the awning.

nd the mast is a square of timbers, like a stout fence. These are the bitts, to which the running rigging is belayed.

ropes and blocks lead along the mast.

NDANTS, SAILORS, etc., etc., keep always to the starboard side out of respect to POMPEY, who uses the weather, or honourable side.

e rising of the curtain CAPTAIN is standing by poop-rail, looking at the

men at work forward. The Boy holds up the awning so that he can see under it.

THE CHANTYMAN [heard off, amid a click of pawls].

Old Pompey lost Pharsalia fight.

THE SAILORS [heaving at the forward capstan].

Mark well what I do say.

THE CHANTY.

Old Pompey lost Pharsalia fight.

THE SAILORS.

And Cæsar now is the world's delight.

And I'll go no more a-roving,

With Pompey the Great.

A-roving. A-roving.

Since roving's been my ru-i-n,

I'll go no more a-roving

With Pompey the Great.

THE MATE [from far forward]. Avast heaving. Walk back. [Pause] Unship your bars.

THE CAPTAIN. That'll do, boy. [Boy drops awning] Now we're riding to a single anchor.

THE BOY. Yes, sir.

THE CAPTAIN [kindly]. D'you know what little port that is yonder?

THE BOY. No, sir.

THE CAPTAIN. That's Pelusium, in Egypt. This is the Nile.

THE BOY. Is this where the King of Egypt lives, sir?

THE CAPTAIN [pointing]. Over yonder. Where all those soldiers are. That's where the King of Egypt is. Young King Ptolemy, who Pompey sent the letter to, after Cæsar beat him.

THE BOY. Why does Pompey come to him, sir? He's only a boy.

THE CAPTAIN. It was through Pompey he became king. And there are lots of Pompey's old soldiers yonder. An army of them.

THE BOY. What a lot of ships, sir.

THE CAPTAIN [anxiously]. Ye-es. A lot of ships.

THE BOY. They must be men of war, sir. There's a bugle. Oh, look, sir, at those big galleys. Hark at the bugles. [Bugle-calls off] Is that to call the slaves, sir?

THE CAPTAIN [looking under the sharp of his hand]. Is that a boat putting off from the flagship? That big galley nearest to us?

THE BOY. Yes, sir. Don't they pull well, sir? They're coming to us.

THE CAPTAIN. Quick. Get the red side-ropes rove.

[The Boy reeves side-ropes, which he takes from locker by the gangway]

THE BOY [at his work]. They're hailing us, sir.

A CRY. Ship ahoy! Ahoy, you!

THE CAPTAIN. Hulloh!

A CRY. What ship is that?

THE CAPTAIN. The *Fortune*. From Cyprus.

A CRY. Have you Lord Pompey aboard you?

THE CAPTAIN. Yes. Lord Pompey's aboard us. Down below. [Pause]

THE BOY. They seem to be talking together, sir.

A CRY. When did you leave Cyprus?

THE CAPTAIN [humbly]. At noon, sir, yesterday. [A pause]

A CRY. D'ye hear there? You're not to send any boat ashore.

THE CAPTAIN. Ay, ay, my lord.

THE BOY. They're pulling back to the ship, sir.

THE CAPTAIN [testily]. Quick. Dip our streamer. Dip our streamer, boy. Don't you know enough for that?

[The Boy runs aft and dips the streamer] Again. Now. Once more. Here.

[He beckons] Go below quietly, and see if Lord Pompey's stirring. [The Boy goes down the hatch. The CAPTAIN walks up and down, uneasily looking at the distant ships] No. No. I don't like it. [He shakes his head] I wish we were out of it. [Re-enter Boy] Well, lad?

THE BOY. Yes, sir. Lord Pompey's up, sir.

THE CAPTAIN. Ah. [Kindly] You'll be able to tell them, when you get home, that you were shipmates with Pompey the Great.

THE BOY. Yes, sir.

THE CAPTAIN. That's what comes of being a sailor.

THE BOY. Please, sir.

THE CAPTAIN. Yes, boy.

THE BOY. What is the name of that mountain, sir?

THE CAPTAIN. That? That's Mount Cassius. There's a tale about that mountain. Something about a king. Or some one to die there. I forget. Here. What are they doing aboard those galleys?

THE BOY. They are filling full of soldiers. Soldiers are putting off to them in boats.

THE CAPTAIN [striking the bell Mr. Mate, there!]

THE MATE [below, out of sight].

[Enter MATE]

THE CAPTAIN. Oh, Mr. Mate! Here, boy. What are you listening to?

Go forward. And if you want your mother again, you pray.

that King Ptolemy'll let you. [Exit MATE]

[The CAPTAIN speaks intently to MATE]. Look here. We're not wanted here.

Pompey isn't wanted here. The eunuchs have put the King against us.

See those galleys? They're getting ready to sink us. If you see them getting under way, cut the cable.

Don't wait for orders. Cut the cable and hoist sail.

THE MATE. I'll make all ready.

THE CAPTAIN. It makes your boiler boil, though. A week back they'd crawled all round Pompey for a chance to kiss his footman's boots.

they're going to drive him out.

THE MATE. Well, sir. You expect gratitude from a king, they say.

The world's wide. There's other places besides Egypt. Egypt's got trouble enough, without Pompey. What does he come here for? That's what I see.

THE CAPTAIN. He's had a misfortune. One doesn't know where to turn when one's had a misfortune.

having a wife and that. Very well, he's beside himself, for all he does take on.

THE MATE. He'd ought to come with his fleet. That would have frightened them. Coming alone, this makes people think he's a beggar.

D'you think they'll ram us?

THE CAPTAIN. I don't trust them.

THE MATE. The hands don't trust them, neither.

THE CAPTAIN. Ah! the grovellers. What do they say?

THE MATE. They're saying we didn't sign on to be rammed.

THE CAPTAIN. They signed for I choose.

THE MATE. Yes, sir. They're a set of the soldiers and that.

THE CAPTAIN. They got sense. I were Pompey, I'd run for it. A man with a wife like that didn't ought to be in trouble. Well. God send pay.

Watch the hands and stand by. That's your job.

SE MATE. I'll make all clear, sir.
n, there!
SUN [off]. Sir?
SE MATE. Overhaul your gear.
all ready for getting under way.
SUN. Have all ready, sir. I will,
[Whistle]
SE MATE [going]. There's his
ard, sir. [Exit]
ILIP. Steward.
ILIP [entering]. Sir.
THE CAPTAIN. Oh! steward. [PHILIP
atches] Look here, steward. What's
Pompey's object in coming here?
ILIP. He's come to see the King.
THE CAPTAIN. Is he come to ask
helmet?
ILIP. He's come to raise another
out of all his old soldiers here.
THE CAPTAIN. He won't get any
ers here. They're all at the wars.
young King's fighting his sister.
ILIP. That will be patched up.
young King thinks the world of my
er. He'll do what Pompey wants.
THE CAPTAIN. He hasn't answered
Pompey's letter yet.
ILIP. No?
THE CAPTAIN. We've been told not
and a boat ashore.
ILIP. Well, all I know is, the
g King longs to honour Pompey.
for Pompey the old King would
died a poor flute-player in Ephesus.
can see for yourself he's coming.
e's his state barge at the jetty.
. They're out on the roofs.
e's music.
[Enter POMPEY]
THE CAPTAIN [unconvinced]. It may
you say, steward. Ah.
[He starts, salutes, and hastily
crosses to the starboard, or lee
side]
ILIP. My lord. Do you know
day it is, my lord?
POMPEY. What day is it?
ILIP. The day of your triumph,
ord. Your Asian triumph. Thir-
years ago.
POMPEY. Is it so long ago? That
a great day.
ILIP. Yes, indeed, my lord, I'll
forget that day. We always like
keep it up with a little something
ing ourselves.
e brought you a few figs, my lord.
re only Cretans. [He offers figs]
in honour of the day, my lord.
u would accept of them.

POMPEY [taking and tasting]. Thank
you, Philip. [To the CAPTAIN] This
old servant of mine is always bent on
spoiling me.

THE CAPTAIN. Yes, my lord. So I
see.

PHILIP [going]. I'm sure I hope to-day
will be a great day too, my lord.

[Exit PHILIP]
POMPEY. It should be, Philip. [He
lays figs on weather five-tail] Captain!

THE CAPTAIN. Yes, my lord.

POMPEY. Has any one come aboard
for me?

THE CAPTAIN. No, my lord.

POMPEY. Thank you.

THE CAPTAIN. Beg pardon, my lord.

POMPEY. Well?

THE CAPTAIN. The flagship has
ordered us not to send a boat ashore.
I thought I ought to report it, my lord.

POMPEY. Thank you, Captain. A
fine fleet here.

THE CAPTAIN [meaningly]. They seem
to be getting their crews aboard.

POMPEY. What speed have those
galleys?

THE CAPTAIN. Those there, my
lord? They might make seventeen.
That's with good rowers. And dead
calm. And the ships new out of dock.
In a wind like this, they wouldn't make
more'n about eight. They can't work
their oars in a sea-way. [Pause] Now's
the time, my lord, if you think of put-
ting to sea. By and by, may be, they'll
be able to stop us.

POMPEY. Thank you, Captain.

THE CAPTAIN. I'll report any boat,
my lord. [Exit]

[Enter CORNELIA]

CORNELIA. Has the King sent?

POMPEY. No.

CORNELIA. No answer?

POMPEY. Not yet.

CORNELIA. Can he know we are
here?

POMPEY. Yes. He will come. He
will come in person.

CORNELIA. Why has he not come
already?

POMPEY. It is early.

CORNELIA. Do you think it is safe
to wait? It is ominous. This silence.
And all those ships. And the people
crowding on the roofs. What if the
King be against us?

POMPEY. He cannot be. Do not be
afraid.

[Enter THEOPHANES]

THEOPHANES. Magnus. They have sent an order. We are not to send a boat ashore. They are plotting something.

POMPEY. If they were plotting, they would ask us to come ashore.

CORNELIA. But why should we not send a boat, if they are friendly?

POMPEY. The King will be coming in person. Then there was plague in Cyprus. We have not got a clean bill.

CORNELIA. But to be ordered.

THEOPHANES. The Admiral should have come.

POMPEY. This is a merchantman. We are not under Roman colours.

CORNELIA. The Captain there is anxious. Look at him.

THEOPHANES. Ask him.

POMPEY. It is necessary for the world that I see King Ptolemy.

[The CAPTAIN flings down the halliard coil and goes below.]

Strange. Is there any Cassius with Ptolemy.

CORNELIA. Lucius Cassius is dead, surely.

THEOPHANES. There's Quintus Cassius. But he is in Spain.

CORNELIA. Is there not Cneius Cassius? He was legate in one of Cæsar's legions?

POMPEY. Cneius? I thought he was killed?

THEOPHANES. I could find out. Sextus would know.

POMPEY. No. Do not wake him. It is absurd.

CORNELIA. Why do you ask?

POMPEY. When I was in Africa, at that time, an old woman bade me beware of Cassius. I have not thought of it for thirty-four years. An old black hag. Sitting in the sun, there. By the ruins of Carthage. Geminius was riding with me. She hobbled up on a crutch and plucked at my rein. "Young captain. You beware of Cassius. You that ride so proud, beware of Cassius. The sand is falling."

CORNELIA. Why should you think of that now?

POMPEY. Because I am going to victory, as I was then.

[The HANDS come aft]

THE MATE [following]. Get down off the poop. If you want anything, send a man aft.

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, your honour. We want to speak.

2ND HAND. We mean to speak.

3RD HAND. We want to know we're brought here.

4TH HAND. And how long we stay here.

2ND HAND. He's been beaten.

4TH HAND. He's got no fear. Our lives are as good to us as his.

THE MATE. Down off the poop. Down with you! Bosun, there!

[Struggling]

POMPEY. What is the matter?

[Struggling ends.]

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, your honour. We wanted to speak to the Captain.

POMPEY. [To the MATE] What is their grievance?

THE MATE. Some more of our fancies, my lord. [To the HANDS] over to leeward.

POMPEY. They seem a good crew. What is it?

THE MATE. Oh, the Captain's ill. I'll settle it, my lord. [To the HANDS] You wait.

[Exit by hatch to find CAPTAIN]

Pause. POMPEY takes a half turn, and then speaks]

POMPEY. [To HANDS] Of what do you complain?

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, your honour. We'd rather wait for the Captain.

POMPEY. What is wrong, the Captain? Tell me.

1ST HAND. I'd rather not say, my lord.

POMPEY [takes a half turn, and then speaks again]. Come. What is the trouble? Is it the food? Or the drink?

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, your honour. We don't like the food of things.

POMPEY. What things?

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, the ships there.

2ND HAND. They're getting close to sink us.

POMPEY. Why do you think that?

3RD HAND. You can see the smoke going aboard them, can't you?

1ST HAND. [To 3RD] Here they are.

3RD HAND. [To 1ST] What's wrong? It's the truth. Isn't it?

POMPEY. So they are going to sink us? Why should they sink us?

3RD HAND. Because you're afraid of us. [He stands out] You're not worth anything. You're no good to Ptolemy.

ar's the man, now, not you. You're more than what we are.

o the HANDS] And we're to be ned, are we, because his mighti- that was is worth more dead than ? He's down. He's no one. He's fellows die for him for forty years. time he learned what it feels like elf.

H HAND. That's what I say.

D HAND. Come on!

D HAND. Man the halliards.

D HAND. We'll carry you to r. And sell you.

OMPEY. Stand back!

ou say that the soldiers are coming ak us?

ere are five thousand troops there, fifty ships.

e they all coming to sink us?

seems a large force to sink one manned by such a company.

D HAND. Here. Look here!

r HAND. { [To 3RD] You'll get us hanged.

D HAND. { Give him sheet.

H HAND. { How about us? That's what I say.

OMPEY. If I am still so terrible, I save you. I will go to the flagship er. Man your boat.

D HAND. You will go to the flag-

r HAND [alarmed]. Look at her.

H HAND. Look.

D HAND. Look at her. She's got ars out.

r HAND. She's coming. We're up.

D HAND. Then he'll go first.

r HAND [holding him]. No, you

[Enter CAPTAIN]

TE CAPTAIN. She's coming, my Shall I cut? We might do it, now.

OMPEY. She is not coming. And e were, what is death?

TE CAPTAIN. Hard times for the w, my lord.

OMPEY [to the men]. Leave the

you think the soul can be quenched water? Or cut with swords? Or ed?

D HAND. I know my body can, rd.

OMPEY. You do well to fear death. your place.

[Musingly] If death can crush what comprehends heaven? Why! We are in a bad way, Captain.

[The HANDS file off, quietly.

POMPEY looks down on the main deck. The CAPTAIN stands apart anxiously watching the flagship. CORNELIA and THEOPHANES eye each other]

CORNELIA. Is the flagship coming?

THEOPHANES. She is ready to come.

CORNELIA. To sink us?

THEOPHANES. She could sink us.

CORNELIA. I cannot bear this.

[POMPEY turning, walks toward them]

THEOPHANES. We ought to have gone to our fleet. We're helpless like this.

CORNELIA. Magnus. This isn't what we planned.

POMPEY. Let me reassure you. Egypt is friendly to me.

I saved her independence. I made the elder Ptolemy King. The young King is my ward, bound to me by intimate ties. Those troops are veterans of my Asian Army.

THEOPHANES. The young King's at his wits' end with civil war. How can he begin a war with Cæsar?

POMPEY. Cæsar will begin a war with him whether he takes me or rejects me. Cæsar wants Egypt, as Ptolemy very well knows.

CORNELIA [bitterly]. And we are suppliants to him. We Romans. To whom they should strike their flags. [After a pause, quickly] See if they refuse to salute us.

THEOPHANES. We should know what to expect then.

CORNELIA. Oh, let us be certain. Hoist your colours.

POMPEY. It is not time yet. I will hoist them when the watch ends.

[The CAPTAIN strikes the bell once]

THE CAPTAIN. One bell, my lord.

POMPEY. The watch is nearly out?

THE CAPTAIN. Nearly, my lord. Will you hoist any colours, my lord?

POMPEY. My consular colours.

THE CAPTAIN. I'm only a merchant-man, my lord. If they should refuse to salute, my lord?

POMPEY. You will go alongside the flagship there, and order her to salute.

THE CAPTAIN [going]. I am all ready to get under way, my lord. Bosun, there! Stand by. Mr. Mate. Boy, there!

[*He goes to the break of the poop and looks down on main deck*]

Are your colours bent on, Centurion?

CENTURION [*off*]. Tell him, yes.

BOY [*off*]. All ready to hoist, sir.

THE CAPTAIN [*coming to POMPEY*]. All ready, my lord. Will you make eight bells, my lord?

POMPEY. When it is time. [*He paces leisurely*]

Theophanes. Have you your tables?

THEOPHANES. Yes.

POMPEY. I shall want you to take notes.

[*To CORNELIA*] What was that passage about the soul? We were reading it that day at Alba, when the women brought you their first-fruits? Our first year. We were in the garden. You were reading to me. There was a verse about the soul.

CORNELIA. The upright soul is safe?

POMPEY. Yes. That was the verse. I have always loved Alba. I was there as a child. We were happy there, that year.

CORNELIA. Very happy. And that day. The doves came, picking the spilled grain. And at night there was a moon.

POMPEY. All the quiet valley. And the owls were calling. Those little grey owls. Make eight bells, Captain.

[*The CAPTAIN makes it. The BOSUN pipes the colours up*]

THE CAPTAIN. Not so fast there, boy.

[*Eight bells is echoed over the harbour from ship to ship.*

POMPEY and THEOPHANES raise their right hands. Perhaps

CORNELIA ought to veil]

THEOPHANES. The flagship is hoisting her ensign. [*Bugles off*]

CORNELIA. Will she salute? Will she salute? There.

THEOPHANES. There. She dips it.

CORNELIA. They all salute.

THEOPHANES. Then we are safe.

POMPEY. That is settled, then. I am to be received. The King expects me.

THE CAPTAIN. I beg pardon, my lord. I think his Majesty the King is coming off to fetch you. The barge is putting off, my lord. [*Approaching*] No, my lord; it is not the King, it is one of the pearl-boats, my lord, which work the pearl-beds here.

POMPEY. Something of the kind. What do you make of her?

THE CAPTAIN. They pull very badly, my lord. They pull like soldiers.

POMPEY. They are soldiers. the gleam of armour.

THEOPHANES. Seven soldiers.

THE CAPTAIN. Am I to let alongside, my lord?

POMPEY. Wait.

THEOPHANES. Has he sent like that for you?

CORNELIA. You cannot go in old boat.

THEOPHANES. Magnus. The some treachery.

CORNELIA. Cneius. It is a risk. To stay.

POMPEY. It is necessary. I carry this thing through. You rather I ran the risk than let the become — what it will become.

CORNELIA. Much rather.

POMPEY. You will understand.

THE CAPTAIN. They are hailing lord. Would the lady go below a They might fling a dart on board.

CORNELIA. The air is fresher

SEPTIMIUS [*off*]. Hail! Po

Imperator.

THE CAPTAIN. We could still for it, my lord.

POMPEY. We must not show we mistrust them.

SEPTIMIUS [*off*]. Hail, Pompey

perator!

POMPEY. Have your men read salute.

SEPTIMIUS [*off*]. In bow.

CORNELIA. Cneius. Cneius.

POMPEY. There is no danger. you the little book with my spee

Ptolemy?

CORNELIA. Here it is.

SEPTIMIUS [*off*]. Toss your sta

oars. Way enough.

POMPEY. Company there. Sa

THE CAPTAIN. The call, there.

[*Enter SEPTIMIUS, a Roman m*

tribune, with ACHILLAS EGY

both in military dress. The E

pipes the side for each of them]

POMPEY [*advancing*]. You come King Ptolemy?

[*SEPTIMIUS salutes, Ach*

bows]

ACHILLAS. From King Ptolemy send you royal greeting.

POMPEY. He wishes to see me

ACHILLAS. He wish to see you

be your friend.

POMPEY. Shall I bring the

alongside the quay there?

ACHILLAS. There is much mu

banks. There would be no water in this galley. You have to take a boat. POMPEY [*glancing at ships*]. Your ship is getting under way here?

ACHILLAS [*shrugging his shoulders*]. Will you come into my boat?

POMPEY. She is not a very hand-some boat.

ACHILLAS. No? It is bad weather times.

POMPEY. [*To SEPTIMIUS*] I think I should know you, my friend. You and I have served together?

[SEPTIMIUS *nods, but does not answer*]

Where was it? I know your face.

[*No answer*]

Long time ago. Eighteen years ago. I was in the war against the pirates? [*Pause*]

Did you not? [*No answer*]

You commanded a company in my army. [*Pause*] You did something?

You burnt a ship one night? You were burnt out alone and set fire to her?

Remember you. I gave you a sword. You are wearing it now.

SEPTIMIUS [*turning to the boat, muttering to himself*]. I'm as good a man as you are.

ACHILLAS. You come in my little boat. I take you to the King. The King is your friend. Lovely lady, the King wants to see him.

CORNELIA. Yes.

POMPEY. I will follow you. Go down the boat.

[ACHILLAS, *bowing, goes to gangway, where he stands, looking aft*]

POMPEY. Now.

THEOPHANES. Magnus. You mustn't

CORNELIA. Cneius. Cneius. What do they mean?

THEOPHANES. You mustn't go, Mag-

POMPEY. My beloved! You must stay here. You must not come.

CORNELIA. My darling! What are you going to do?

POMPEY. What God wills.

THEOPHANES. If this is the end, I don't want to be the end. Those arrangements of the fleet. Cancel them. You must stand. Go to Cato. Tell Cato to omit to Caesar. War will only bring more bloodshed. He cannot fight against Caesar. I could have.

Caesar's daughter. Make your father go to Caesar. Keep my sons out of the war. Tell them. End the war. Life is grand, but there is something

behind it. Something which strikes a mean. I had my hand on it. Come. Courage. These are Egyptians. [*To CORNELIA*]

Captain. You must sail. Stand by.

What else is there? Asia. Theophanes. Asia must submit. Send to the Kings. The world must make what terms it can. This is all in the event. If this is the end. You understand? If not, you know my orders.

Philip. Scythes. Cotta. Go down into the boat.

PHILIP. My lord. I've served you a long time, my lord.

POMPEY. What is it, Philip?

[*COTTA and SCYTHES go*]

PHILIP. My lord. My old, beloved lord.

POMPEY. Why, Philip. We are the only ones left. We are two old Sulla's men. Have you my cloak in the boat?

PHILIP. Forty years, my lord.

POMPEY. The brodered one. [*To CORNELIA*] Your gift. Come. Carry it down, man.

PHILIP. I wish it was to begin all over again. [*Exit*]

ACHILLAS. Will you come into the boat? The King is waiting.

CORNELIA. Cneius. My husband. My husband.

POMPEY. God only lends us.

If the King keep faith. We shall have time. Time for what we must imagine. If not. We know our love. The gods treasure you. [*He goes towards gangway.*]

Remember, Captain.

THEOPHANES. If I fail, you must warn Lentulus.

[*He goes to gangway. The BOBUN starts to pipe the side. POMPEY turns to the BOY. BOBUN stops his pipe. POMPEY takes figs from fife-rail and gives them to the BOY*]

Can you eat figs?

[*The BOY mumbles*]

What is your name?

[*The BOY bursts into tears*]

ACHILLAS [*at gangway*]. Give me your hand. I take your hand down.

POMPEY [*pausing in the gangway and looking back. Sadly. To THEOPHANES*]. "Into a tyrant's court the truly brave goes proudly, though he go to die a slave."

[*He goes down. The BOBUN pipes the side*]

SEPTIMIUS [*coldly*]. Back your port oars. Shove off. Give way together.

THE CAPTAIN [*softly to MATE*]. Go on there. Man your halliards.

THE MATE. Take the turns off. Stretch it along. Softly now. Stand by.

[*The SEAMEN coming behind*

CORNELIA, *man the halliards.*

THE CHANTYMAN *stands on the bits. All look after the boat*]

THE CHANTY. There's a lot of troops ashore.

THE MATE. S's't.

CORNELIA. They are not talking to him.

THEOPHANES. He is reading his speech. [*Pause*] He organises everything. Cæsar improvises.

CORNELIA. There they go out of the sun.

THEOPHANES. The hill casts a long shadow.

CORNELIA. What is the name of the hill?

THE CAPTAIN. Mount Cassius, lady.

THEOPHANES [*quickly*]. They are coming with banners. Look.

CORNELIA. He is safe.

THEOPHANES. There comes the King. Hark! Trumpets. They're saluting. He is standing up to land.

CORNELIA. Ah! Swords. He is stabbed.

THEOPHANES. Ah! you gods. You gods!

CORNELIA. Oh! He is killed! He is killed! He is killed! [*She collapses*]

THEOPHANES [*covering his eyes*]. The devils! The devils!

THE MATE. They stabbed him in the back.

ANTISTIA. It's ebb-tide now, my beauty.

THE CAPTAIN [*yelling*]. Cut the cable. [*Chopping forward*]

A VOICE. All gone, the cable.

THE MATE. Let fall.

A VOICE. All gone.

THE MATE. Sheet home. Hoist away.

THE MEN. Ho. [*They haul*]

THE CHANTY. Away ho!

[*The MEN haul*]

[*He intones in a clear loud voice.*

The SEAMEN sing the chorus, hauling]

[*This song is sung like an ordinary halliard chanty. The chorus is to the tune of the old chanty of "Hanging Johnny." The solo will be intoned clearly, without tune. It goes to fast time, the chorus starting almost before*

the soloist ends his line
MEN *must haul twice, proper manner, in each*
The hauling will have natural accompaniment
whine of the three-sheaved
the grunt of the parrels
slat from the great sail]

THE CHANTY.

Kneel to the beautiful women who this strange brave fruit.

THE MEN. Away, i-oh.

THE CHANTY.

Man with his soul so noble: man half and half brute.

THE MEN. So away, i-oh.

THE CHANTY.

Women bear him in pain that he makes them tears.

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

He is a king on earth, he rules for a years.

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

And the conqueror's prize is dust and endeavour.

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

And the beaten man becomes a story for

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

For the gods employ strange means to their will to be.

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

We are in the wise gods' hands and cannot see.

CHORUS. So away, i-oh.

A VOICE. High enough.

THE MATE. Lie to. [*The S*
lay to the fall] Make fast.

Coil up.

A VOICE. All clear to seaward

THE CAPTAIN. Pipe down.

[*The BOSUN pipes the*

[*Curtain*]

EPILOGUE SPOKEN BY COTT

Pompey was a great Captain,
among Kings, a King,

Now he lies dead on the sand,
blind tumbled thing.

Fate has her secret way to humble
taints thus.

Fate comes to every one and takes
light from us.

And the beginning and the end
darkened waters where no light

But after many days the brook
ocean

And the ship puts to sea.

NOTES

ON THE APPEARANCE OF POMPEY

TRAITS exist of Cneius Pompeius Magnus. The most important of these is the marble bust at Copenhagen. Several likenesses are to be found on the gold and silver coins struck by his son, Sextus, in Spain. Plutarch says of him that, 'being in the prime of man's state, there appeared in his gesture and behaviour a grave and majestic majesty. His hair also stood a little upright, and the cast and soft movement of his eyes had a certain resemblance (as they said) of the statues and images of Alexander under the Great.' This resemblance may still be traced.

At the time of his murder he was fifty-eight years old, a powerful, very active man in the prime of life. His bust, evidently done towards the end of his life, shows that his hair, which was thick, coarse, and worn rather long, still tended to stand a little upright. The head is of great breadth at the eyes. The brow is low and lined with three deep lines of wrinkles going right across it in irregular M shape. The eyebrows are well marked: the supra-orbital ridge is heavy. The nose is full and straight, with the broad base which is so good an index of intellectual power. The chin is of great breadth. The mouth is of that kindly tightness which one sees in the portraits of some of our Admirals. Below the mouth is a deep horizontal line. The chin is not cloven. The face is lined a good deal. A deep straight line runs from each side of the nose to the puckered angles of the mouth. The ears are crow's-footed. There are no indications as to the colour of the hair and eyes. The shape of the head suggests the brown or fair type of man. At the time of his death he was perhaps grizzled.

No known portrait exists of any of the other characters. Metellus came of a family once distinguished for pointed noses, Domitius of a family once famed for fair hair. Cornelia was famous for a grave and gentle beauty. She was young, but already a widow, when Pompey married her, a few months before the civil war began.

ON THE FATE OF THE PERSONS IN THIS TRAGEDY

Scipio. After religiously burning his master's body on the seashore, disappears from history.

Publius Scipio. Fled from Pharsalia to Africa, where he carried on the war until 48 B.C., when he was defeated by Cæsar at Thapsus. Flying from Africa by sea, in bad weather, he was forced to put into the port of Hippo, where one of Cæsar's ships lay at anchor. A battle followed. He is said to have drowned himself shortly after his ship was sunk.

Pompeius Theophanes. Returned to Italy, and was pardoned by Cæsar. He attained great fame as a writer. After his death the Lesbians paid him divine honors. His son held office under Augustus.

Marcus Cato. After Pharsalia, joined Scipio in Africa, and held command of him. He killed himself in Utica, shortly after the battle of Thapsus, so might not live to see the final extinction of liberty. His son was killed at Pharsalia 'valiantly fighting against Augustus,' four years later.

Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus. Was killed (some say by Mark Antony) in the battle, or in the rout, of Pharsalia, at which he commanded the great wing of horse, on the left of Pompey's army.

Marcus Acilius Glabrio. Continued in Cæsar's service, and rose to be governor of Achaia.

Lucius Lucceius. Returned to Rome, and received Cæsar's pardon. He was praised by Cicero for the excellence of his historical writings.

Lucius Afranius. After Pharsalia, joined Scipio in Africa, and held command under him, till the battle of Thapsus. While riding through Mauretania, on his way to Spain, after that disaster, he was ambushed and taken by Cæsar's lieutenant P. Silius. A few days later, the troops of Silius killed him in a camp riot.

Lentulus Spinther. After Pharsalia, fled to Rhodes, where he was refused permission to land. He set sail again 'much against his will,' and either 'perished ingloriously' or disappeared from history.

Achillas Egyptian. Was killed by Arsinoë (Ptolemy's sister) and the eunuch Ganymed in the year after Pompey's murder.

ON THE HOUSE OF POMPEY, AFTER THE MURDER

Cornelia. After seeing her husband killed, fled to Cyrene, and thence to Sicily, where, in time, Pompey's ashes were brought to her. She is said to have buried them 'in a town of hers by the city of Alba,' in Liguria.

Cn. Pompeius Magnus, the Triumvir's eldest son, by his third wife, Mucia, showed courage for a time, showing courage and bold strategic ideas. On hearing of his father's death, he went to Spain, where he raised a great army. He was defeated at the bloody battle of Munda, in the year 45. Soon after the battle, he was betrayed, taken and killed. His head was carried to Seville and exposed there to public gaze.

Sextus Pompeius Magnus. The younger son (also by Mucia) continued to fight in Africa, with Cato's party, till after the battle of Thapsus. He then joined his brother in Spain. After Cæsar's murder, he was proscribed by Octavian, and fled to the seas, with a fleet, burning, sinking, and intercepting commerce, till Octavian came to terms. On the recommencement of war between them, his fleet was destroyed by Octavian's fleet under Agrippa. After trying vainly to beat up a force, he was taken and put to death at Miletus (probably by the order of Mark Antony) in the year 35. He left a daughter whose fate is uncertain. She was with him in Asia in 36.

Pompeia. The daughter (also by Mucia) married Faustus, the son of Sulla. She was killed with Afranius in the mutiny of the troops of P. Silius, in Africa. She afterwards married L. Cornelius Cinna. It is not known when she died, but it is certain that she predeceased her brother, Sextus. She had a son by Cinna, who came to be Consul in A.D. 5. What became of her children by Faustus is not known.

And all their passionate hearts are dust,
And dust the great idea that burned
In various flames of love and lust
Till the world's brain was turned.

God, moving darkly in men's brains,
Using their passions as his tool,
Brings freedom with a tyrant's chains
And wisdom with the fool.

Blindly and bloodily we drift,
Our interests clog our hearts with dreams.
God make my brooding soul a rift
Through which a meaning gleams.

Feb. 8, 1908.

July 5, 1909.

W. B. YEATS
AND
THE IRISH SCHOOL OF PLAYWRIGHTS

THE IRISH SCHOOL OF PLAYWRIGHTS

THERE is no need of approaching the Irish Dramatic Movement unless one has something of the Dublin Riots, when Synge's "The Playboy of the Western World" was first given, on January 26, 1907. And the ill-will evident then was repeated in Boston, where the play was given on October 16, 1911, during a visit of the Irish Players to America. On the latter occasion, word was sent to the effect that the piece must be stopped, and throughout the evening hoots and whistles were mingled with the applause.

It was a very foolish demonstration in Dublin, and a still more unreasonable one in Boston, and the ground of complaint in both instances was the same. A full account of the disturbance has been feelingly written by Lady Gregory in her peculiarly naïve autobiographical volume, "Our Irish Theatre." The Irish have always been sensitive about the stage Irishman. Resentment has been felt at the caricature portraits that have found their way into the previous history of the theatre. When Synge's play was announced, word was sent abroad that in its character it glorified a parricide, who, in a fit of temper, kills his father and is worthy to boast of it. "That is against Irish nature," exclaimed the true Irishman. The fact is, Synge's satire in this particular piece is the satire of Ibsen's "Gynt." On the opening night, with bells and horns and whistles drowning the actors' voices, it was small wonder that the audience had little time in which to criticize or enjoy the rustic quality of the piece. It seemed as though there were too much action to break up the play rather than to hear it. The demonstration in Dublin was W. B. Yeats dreadfully uncomfortable; he was away from Dublin at the time, and the first despatch told him of success, hastily followed by a second despatch announcing the disorder.

Probably never before in the history of the theatre had an audience so brazenly sought to dictate terms to the actors. Warnings were sent, both in Dublin and in Boston, and advice was given that certain lines had best be left unspoken. In fact, if the wishes of the mob had been met, the whole Irish peasantry would have been cut out of the play entirely from the text.

The actors went on with their parts throughout the evening, though no word was made to make itself heard above the tumult. In Dublin, pamphlets were written, naming Synge as a maligner of Irish womanhood; in Boston, letters of protest appeared in the newspapers, and editors sought the opinions of prominent people. And because they did not understand that Synge, in his short career as a dramatist, was not a literal realist, but, for the sheer fun of amusement, had exalted a liar to the position of a hero. In this way Synge was ironically ridiculing the simple faith of the Irish people. And afterwards the combatants took account of their wounds. "I said one man on the streets of Dublin, pointing to a space where two had been, 'look, I lost those on the opening of 'The Playboy of the Western World'."

The Abbey Theatre has thriven in an atmosphere of opposition, and float beneath the lintel of its door. The Viceroy of Ireland will not come to cause the band refuses to play "God Save the King"; he has been known to enter the theatre because, as a representative of Royalty, the management him the red velvet carpet in the aisle which his position commands. And in defiance of the English censor, the theatre has sheltered Shaw. In retaliation Crown authorities, empowered to grant patents to the theatres, have limited the playhouse to dramas of Irish life only. Thus England has defined more rigidly than art would define it the scope of the Irish National Theatre.

A movement opposed is usually one with the red blood of life in it; and this was the healthy aspect of the Celtic renaissance before the War. For, as Yeats said, "An audience with national feeling is alive; at the worst it is alive to quarrel with."

There comes a time, in every literary movement, when art cannot thrive on ideals and theories; when it has to have money for its maintenance. When W. B. Yeats came to America on a lecture tour, and the practical result of his visit was that thereafter he was better enabled to devote his attention and energy to a dramatic cause born of his individual fervour. After a second trip to America in 1911, Yeats returned home with a comfortable feeling that the Irish Playmakers, making profit in their tour of the United States, as well as attaining glory.

Strange to say, this art movement in Ireland, which is so closely identified with the history and development of Yeats, is not so significant for its æsthetic value as for its connection with the nationalism which is part and parcel of the Irish mind. Seeing that immediate independence would not be offered them through the usual channels, and realizing a dangerous apathy of the Irish people toward an art that was at hand in their natures and in their local surroundings, in their traditions, in their mystic superstitions, societies were founded for the development and furtherance of things strictly Irish. The Gaelic language was revived. The Irish legends and sagas were utilized in order to symbolize the inherent glory of Erin. From an impulse, a school of playwrights, representing in their expression both realism and symbolism, sprang into being. It is in this school that we find Ireland reasserting her nationalism and giving utterance to her individual existence. Likewise, the literary industry was encouraged. The spirit was not so much parochial as it was national, and this distinction gives a broader sweep to both the poetry and the drama of Ireland.

It were wrong, indeed, to lay Ireland's love of nationalism entirely to the hatred of England, even though Mario Borso has claimed, in his book of *The English Stage*, "that she

has remained deeply religious, bigoted and Papist, simply because Catholicism appeals to her as a weapon wherewith to fight Protestant England.

It is wrong to assume that, before the War and before the Ulster agitation, Ireland fathered individual art entirely for the sake of political propaganda, in the way, as Yeats, in defining a national literature, has claimed that "It is the writers who are moulded by influences that are moulding their country, and they write out of so deep a life that they are accepted there in the end."

The Celtic renaissance, brought about by the denial of political rights, the postponement of Home Rule, by the lost hope of Parnell, and by the rem-

one, simply awakened Irish pride in the past, and encouraged a vision of the future, and a loving scrutiny of the Irish present which, in their several ways, are characteristics of the Irish literature in this modern revival.

Some people claim that the revival of Gaelic, encouraged by Douglas Hyde, and others, was simply a move on the part of the Irish to irritate the English authorities, who knew nothing of and cared less about the dialect. Stories are told of postal officials returning envelopes addressed in the uncial script, to the eye relates Gaelic to Greek; others claim that once upon a time an member in the House of Commons began his speech in his native *patois*, much to the consternation and disgust of his associates. But Yeats is authority for the sentiment that the revival of their ancient language has had its social purpose; it has served in some instances to drive drink from the land. "Teach us," the children of hill and glen, "teach us the Gaelic which is the only tongue in Paradise." Hence, in lonely cabins, under thatched roof, a dead language has come to life again. And it seemed at the outset as though Gaelic was to have wider sway than Mistral's "Langue d'Oc" in the heart of Provence.

The Celtic renaissance began about the year 1890 and declared itself very rapidly in definite channels. The Irish peasant was made the central object of interest; the squalor and poverty in which he lived were projected against the rich background of Gaelic lore before which he moved. Literature had caught flashes of Irish peasant life before in Maria Edgeworth's "Castle Rackrent." But now it was to exalt the very heart of Ireland itself. Irish character heretofore had been eased in the mould of English models, as in Goldsmith and in Sheridan; or had been conventionally caricatured and degraded as in Boucicault. Now, Irish character was designed to be depicted through the medium of Irish sympathy and pride.

As intellectual energy gathering headway, the Gaelic League was founded in 1893, probably encouraged through the establishment of the National Literary Society by Yeats in Dublin, during 1891. Dates are significant only as an indication of the rapid spread of the Irish Movement. The year 1893 likewise saw the founding of the Irish Literary Society and of the Irish Text Society, both intent on editing Irish manuscripts. Yeats's literary organization fathered the cause of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1898, and it came into existence with a policy as invigorated as protective of originality as the Independent Theatre in London and the Théâtre Libre in Paris.

It is difficult to surmise what would have been the fate of the Irish Theatre Movement, built upon ideas, and as poor as the Irish peasantry itself, had it not been for the timely assistance of Miss A. E. F. Horniman, a patroness of the arts and a patron saint to the repertory idea.

When the theatre began, there were no Irish actors to take the parts in Yeats's "Countess Cathleen." Therefore, on May 8, 1899, in the ancient concert-room of the Lyceum, an English company produced the piece. This performance resulted in an action indicative of the sensitiveness of the people to any criticism of any special characteristics which might be considered general traits of the Irish people. Some persons argued that it was unpatriotic of Yeats to have *Countess Cathleen* sell her soul to the devil in order to relieve her people of famine, inasmuch as not only beneath the dignity of an Irishman to sell his soul to the devil, but no Irishman would dare to make such a bargain. The high seriousness of the play made them in the temper of the moment. Referring to this incident, Yeats has written:

The greatest difficulty before the creator of a living Irish drama has and to some extent still is, the extreme sensitiveness of a nation, which come to look upon Irish literature, not as a free play of the mind over the face and in the depths of life, but as a defence delivered before a prejudiced who have heard a very confident advocate on the other side.

Certain it is that the history of the establishment of any Irish Theatre inevitably be bound up with the flare of Irish temper.

In 1917, there was an effort, on the part of some enthusiastic Irish literati in New York, to establish the Irish Theatre of America. When one of them was asked what play had been accepted for the opening bill, the reply was "I have met several times to make our choice, but at each conference our members have split into factions, one believing that Sir Roger Casement should have been shot, and the other that he should not have been shot. With the consensus that no play has thus far been selected for the Irish Theatre." That is the spirit of contention which has helped to retard the development of an Irish Theatre playhouse.

In 1903, W. G. Fay gathered about him a small band of Irish amateur actors and themselves the Irish National Dramatic Company; and this later became the Irish National Theatre Society. The members of the organization, in their ordinary pursuits, were workers and clerks concerned in efforts furthest away from the stage. These evening contributions were their recreation. About this time, Miss Fay offered her assistance. Beginning with 1904, she not only allowed the Irish National Theatre Society a small annual subsidy, but she purchased the old building of the Mechanics Institute, in Dublin, and turned it over to the Society. The house was renovated by Irish skill and Irish labour. Thus the Abbey Theatre came into existence.

An art theatre must not only be representative of an art idea, but it must be a product of this idea. And when a theatre starts its career with a distinct object of arousing Ireland's consciousness of herself, it has to be filled with material of national significance. Had it not been for the efforts of W. B. Yeats and Edward Martyn, there would have been no Synge and no Lady Gregory. These two were born out of the very heart of the Movement, and these two were nurtured by Yeats. They are not exotics, as George Moore has ever been in his relation to the Irish Theatre; they are close to the heart of the land. Should one wish to know of peasant life and to know how that knowledge was enriched by the devotion of the New Irish Theatre, read Yeats's "Celtic Twilight," filled with the elemental superstitions of a peasantry sprung from the soil. Should one wish to follow the sources of Synge's poetic, though none the less elemental pictures of peasant life, read his "The Aran Islands," which is a revised notebook of his impressions after an intimate stay with a peculiar people. Ever since the Movement began, the Irish student has been self-consciously alive to the gathering of facts; he has frequented cabin and field and has courted intimate familiarity with the peasant. He has tried, in every way, to obtain his end without awakening any self-consciousness on the part of the people. Even Synge, intent on catching every variety of speech among the Aran people, was known to eavesdrop at doors ajar, or to listen to cracks in a rotting floor so as to hear some conversation in a room below.

The enthusiasm of the Irish writer of the Celtic renaissance has led him

more of life than of expression. But Yeats is nothing if not an artist, and he always insisted that Irishmen must study English, must draw their form from the very best sources, must not lay themselves open to the charge that they are unnatural. If necessary, they must follow William Blake's example, — they copy out the English Bible. Hence Yeats's significant mandate, "Let us learn construction from the masters and dialogue from ourselves."

Yeats has edited two magazines, which he has dedicated to the cause of Irish art, and literature. There were three numbers of *Beltaine*, after which the name of the periodical was altered to *Samhain*, meaning "the beginning of Autumn." It was a casual periodical, issued once yearly, or rather issued whenever Yeats was in the mood for it, and no reader interested in the Celtic revival can afford to miss it, for it contains the essence of Yeats's fervour. The Movement was rapid, but not of great growth. It has, as we have hinted, evolved from riot. But its influence has been great. In fact, as George Moore has written :

Many will think that I am guilty of exaggeration when I say that the Irish Literary Theatre has done more to awaken intellectual life in Ireland than any University College.

At the least agreeable part of this renaissance is to be had in the growth of geographical impression around it. A living, breathing, pastoral quality is to be found in certain chapters of Moore's "Hail and Farewell," descriptive in the delightfully impertinent spirit of the personalities and the personalia centering about the early performances of the Irish National Theatre. Had the Movement produced nothing more than these impressions and naïve tributes to the cause and to the people behind the cause, in the writings of Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Synge, it would have contributed much to the picturesque side of the history of dramatic art. For, despite the opposition met everywhere, the Movement has encouraged a comradeship which is felt whenever a group of the Irish Players is found. Concomitant with Yeats and Lady Gregory is replete with the sparkle of enthusiasm. Their visit to America with the Abbey Theatre Players, they referred to "our plays" as a mother would speak of her children. The players on their American tour were moved by no pretensions. The Irish dramatists who came over with them were mystically silent. As the dominant force in the revival, Yeats's whole attitude in relation to the theatre sprang from high imagination; he has lived up to his theory of acting, and has kept the technique simple, and he has insisted on the necessity of departing from minute detail and extravagance. "We have," he once said, "a far greater need of the severe discipline of French and Scandinavian drama than of Shakespeare's luxuriance."

It changes all things. What the Celtic renaissance will be after the present war is a conflict it is as difficult to say as what the world will be after nations have gone to war upon each other. But historically we may say, looking back on the beginning of the Celtic renaissance as it was until August, 1914, that this Irish renaissance was Yeats. He steeped himself in Irish verse and held firmly to his art ideals. In the folk literature he has drawn a mysticism akin to that of Maeterlinck, yet different from Maeterlinck in that it upheld both nationalism and a peculiar quality of humour. Though he started out with no theory of the unexpressed, such as the Symbolist poet held, yet in Yeats's plays there is an interior beauty, a spiritual quality akin to that of Maeterlinck. It is strange that Yeats should have been so

closely identified with the Abbey Theatre, and yet should have succeeded in getting so far removed from the real dramatic.

When he was last in America, his appearance was that of the dream visitor to our shores has ever remained so aloof from the stir of American condition. Tall, with slightly stooping shoulders, his dark hair shot through grey, and parted carelessly on one side, his long face with its heavy jaw, his nose, with delicately cut nostrils revealing sensitiveness, his small eyes above high cheek bones, his glasses oddly cut to allow of a straight piece to the nose, this was the picture of Yeats during his visit in 1911. There was no colour to his face. The forehead was high, with arched brows that in moments of contemplation were raised to the point of interrogation. When talking, he looked fixedly at one. His nervous hands moved constantly. His manner, rather than his appearance, proclaimed the poet, even though a soft flowing tie was the conventional sign. His talk was rapid, with now and then a slight hesitation, due to his being ahead of expression.

Such a man was responsible for the prestige of the Irish Players, and for the inspiration for the policy of the Irish Repertory Theatre.

It was while in Paris, intent on establishing another society, during 1891, that Yeats came across Synge, tucked away in the Latin Quarter. Ireland was not in the latter's thoughts, for Synge had been in France since his Trinity days, and was much more concerned about French literature than about the counties of Wicklow, Kerry, and Connemara, which afterwards formed the basis for his "Aran Islands."

Eloquent, at all time, regarding the art of Ireland, Yeats persuaded Synge to return to his own land and to throw his energies into the Celtic Renaissance movement. This he did, and there developed in his interest a new character, heretofore found in his poetry, his criticism, or his stories, — the dramatic which was latent in the character of Synge. One has but to read here and there in his book of travel to understand the sources of his very vivid plays. The second time, Yeats became the prime mover in developing a talent more original than his own, more wild and ungovernable, and filled with a gypsy poetry born of the wild west of Ireland. For Synge's observation is tinged with satire, a phantasmic strain as variable as the humour of "Peer Gynt"; thus "The Playboy of the Western World" could not help but be pre-ordained by his personality.

Even if Yeats has not justified his full claim to dramatic honours — "Cathleen ni Houlihan" is rightly popular and holds its own in Dublin — with Synge's "The Playboy of the Western World" — at least he may be said that the three products emanating from his enthusiasm and sacrifice have been successful: The significant position of the Abbey Theatre which continued after Miss Horniman withdrew her subsidy, Synge's permanent literary reputation, and Lady Gregory's healthy humour of life. There is no despondency in the work of Synge — no Celtic throb of dreadful sorrow, such as is to be found in the work of Lionel Johnson. His plays contain the red blood of passion, while the plays of Yeats have the white glint of dreams.

The emotionalism of Yeats is balanced by a critical attitude toward the Irish Literary Movement. A reading of the too few copies of *Samhain* will demonstrate this. His desire has always been to have the common man understand great art, and his own poetry has a quality about it which only the learned and the cultured

understand. He has placed himself in that stream of reaction against eighteenth-century rationalism and nineteenth-century materialism, and he has created something different from the symbolism of Wagner, the pre-Raphaelite school in England, and de l'Isle-Adam, Mallarmé and Maeterlinck in France.

Yeats has always been persistent in his separation of the circumstances of life from what he has called the emotional values of poetry. Though aware that most of the school emanating from his enthusiasm wrote of a condition that was part of the actual physical and political condition of Ireland, still Yeats has been unswerving in his demand for contemplative mood and imaginative originality in art. At one time a young woman came to him for advice. He recognized in her certain qualities which was being perverted by the theatre of commerce. His recommendation to her was to fall into an original attitude toward life, but he warned her that sooner or later should she do so than she would have her class against her. Here's where the Irish Movement found its greatest handicap; in the past it has been opposed in circumstances where it would most have served. There were some who feared that the people of Ireland, with their overpowering passion, would have a baleful influence on the crowd. But "A. E." (Russell), writing on "Dramatic Treatment of Heroic Character", claimed that there need be no fear "that many forbidden subjects will be themes for dramatic art; that Maene with her many husbands will walk the stage and the lusts of an earlier age be revived to please the lusts of to-day. The power of art is not in its subjects, but in the attitude of the artist's mind."

What Yeats's attitude was in 1911, when he came to America on a visit, seems to have been well reflected in his utterances during the Irish Players' appearance in New York. Speaking before the Drama League, he said:

From the first start of our intellectual movement in Ireland, our faith in the success has come from our knowledge of the life of the country places and the imaginative beauty of their speech. One discovers thoughts there not very unlike those of the Greek dramatists. Of course there is a great deal that is crude, but there are songs and stories showing an attitude of mind that forms the very root of art.

Under the auspices of the Harvard Dramatic Club, Yeats approached his favorite theme of the Theatre of Beauty, in which light and shadow were to be in accordance with the theories made possible by Gordon Craig's new inventions. The scenic artists, from the very beginning, have upheld the intention to produce not a general, a more symbolic, a more imaginative setting, that shall give the feeling of life rather than its appearance.

A word regarding the Abbey Players' success in America, during their tour of 1911, will add further to a general impression of the Irish Players' accomplishment. It had come heralded from England, and praised for their sincerity and their freedom from artificial acting. They brought with them a varied repertory. To perform in the afternoon requires no little adaptability — the one is so full of deep tragedy, the other so sparkling with impertinence. And the two extremes of the Irish repertoire are very well illustrated when Synge's "Riders to the Sea" and Lady Gregory's "The Rising of the Moon", "Spreading the News", or, "The Workhouse Wench" are contrasted.

The players who came with Yeats were unsophisticated; they acted with an

intensity that showed how well they felt the life they were called upon to po. They read verse with an understanding of its rhythmic quality. They passed gravity to humour — a surprising characteristic in Synge — with an adapt that showed how pliable their art was, even if not perfect in their hands. costumes were old and torn, green with the age of the pawnshop, grimy with dirt of the road. These players came from the rank and file of workers, with professional preparation for the stage. What they learned, they gained in theatre itself. Their crudeness was the crudity of childlike love of play. Both the Irish playwright and the Irish actor impressed us with the fact that they were much like children in their naïve spirit.

The repertory brought from Ireland created no end of criticism. T. C. M. "Birthright", brutal in parts; Lady Gregory's "Hyacinth Halvey", considered best; and Synge's "The Shadow of the Glen" challenged the patience of the American, who contended that in every way these pieces distorted Irish life and Irish character. The professional actor found much that was intellectual in the repertory. The critic found much that was austere. But the pathos in the drama is poignant, the humour volatile, the character rich in colour. In performing "Cathleen ni Houlihan", though the setting might be as bare as that in the pictures "The Shadow of the Glen", the spiritual fervour of the reading, as told by Yeats, filled the dim cottage with a light which was purely the light of emotion and feeling and poetry.

The very names of the Irish Players brought poetry to the ear — Eithne M. Eileen O'Doherty, Maire ni Shiubhlaigh, Cathleen Nesbit. The tongue rolled off them deliciously. Read Synge's dialogue after you have heard these actors, and you will find that the very rhythm of the prose is Irish.

Before the War, the Irish dramatic art was in a healthy way of increasing. But there has always been one unfortunate factor in the Movement; both dramatist and actor have been content to remain self-conscious in their nationality. They have never once allowed you to forget that they were Irish, and that they were presenting the Irish drama. At the present, this provincialism is forgivable. Yet it is difficult to believe that these simple folk will ever come to agree with you that the Irish thing worth while is to be found outside of home. Before the War, the world of drama turned to them and they paled in the face of the Celtic renaissance.

It struck the present Editor, during conversation with the Irish Players on my last visit, that the personal value was the rich value of Yeats's school of Irish dramatists. I was made to feel that the Irish theatre was my theatre. In the middle of a stately woman, dressed in black, with an Irish lace veil over her hair, who was as familiarly from friend to friend. She held red roses in her arms, and a smile of contentment was on her lips. This was Lady Gregory. Like a sudden gust of wind with rapid nervous strides, a man passed to his orchestra chair, looking neither right nor to left of him, and only dimly conscious of the crowd. This was Synge. By a bookstall in the lobby, with the published plays of the Irish Theatre piled up on a table, stood three or four of the Irish dramatists themselves, — all with an air of enquiry on their faces. Truly, one felt that it was a gathering of the clans!

CATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN

(1902)

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS was born at Sandymount, Dublin, June 13, 1865. His grandfather lived at Sligo, a locality familiarly treated in the poet's early prose verse. His father, John Yeats, is an artist with peculiar national characteristics.

Whoever would know something of the temperament of Yeats as a boy needs to turn to the autobiographical reminiscences of Mrs. Katherine Tynan Hinkley, and throughout the prose work of Yeats one is able to detect the reasons for the change of thought and expression in his development. Like his brother, J. B. Yeats, the poet at first turned his attention, after receiving his education at the Dublin Erasmus School, to the study of art. During this time he was seeking for some means of awakening his country to a sense of its national dignity, and the mystic quality of his later verse was foreshadowed by his interest in theosophy.

When, in 1887, he turned to London, he was writing poetry, and was under the influence of William Morris. His friends of the time were Ernest Dowson, Lionel Lincoln, and Arthur Symonds.

Between this year of 1887 and 1891, when the Irish Literary Theatre began, was developed in Yeats's character all those ideals of art which were to find practical outlet in the Irish renaissance. There is a naïve analysis of his own translation in everything he wrote. We find him explaining the reasons for his turn from art to poetry. His methods of writing are dwelt upon in his essays, "Ideas of Good and Evil." His explanation of the symbol is bound up in his explanation of himself. Everything he did was very personal, even to those experiments which he connected with the psalter in connection with the mere poetry of words. If Arthur Symonds, in later years, was to place Yeats in the symbolist movement, a critic like Forrest Reid, believes that he was in that movement merely to oblige Symonds. Yeats, like Mallarmé, his art being primarily that of a natural singer.

Whatever Yeats gained from his association with Morris, there is no doubt that Yeats's sister, who established the Cuala industries, near Dublin, learned much of embroidery from Morris's daughter. There was a beautiful utilitarian strain in the part of the Irish revival. Utilitarianism, however, is farthest away from the development of Yeats, who, in 1898, showed how he wished to cut himself away from the ordinary moorings and sail the high seas of unfettered thought. He wrote:

I believe that the renewal of belief, which is the great movement of our age, will more and more liberate the arts from their age and from their life, and leave them more and more free to lose themselves in beauty.

From the time that Yeats went to London with his family, in 1887, he began constantly to lose himself in beauty. Everything mystic appealed to him, even to the study of magic. His enthusiasm was that of the poet moved by impulse. One of the numerous biographers tells us that "A. E." described Yeats as one who, re-

turning to his lodgings late in the evening, would wish to continue his talk and poetry through the wee small hours of the night. The present Editor remembers, after a most beautiful production of his "*Cathleen ni Houlihan*", in meeting Yeats at his hotel, at one o'clock, and sitting spellbound while, in the exhilaration of his success, he talked, not of the theatre, but of the power of and the music of words, and the high value of imagination in practical life.

"*The Countess Cathleen*" was written in 1892, and was not staged until years after. The final version of this play, according to Yeats's collected works, was not given to the public until 1912. This shows that, to bibliophiles, the editions of Yeats's works already have an immense value. "*The Land of Heart's Desire*", with its Sligo background, was performed at the Avenue Theatre in London, in the spring of 1894.

In April, 1902, Yeats's most distinctively dramatic piece, "*Cathleen ni Houlihan*", was given by W. G. Fay's company, and in October of that year it was published in *Samhain*. It was after this that Yeats published his "*Plays for the Theatre*", and dedicated the volume to Lady Gregory, making known certain facts concerning the play which are given herewith:

My Dear Lady Gregory:

I dedicate to you two volumes of plays that are in part your own.

When I was a boy I used to wander about at Rosse's Point and Ballisodare listening to old songs and stories. I wrote down what I heard and made poems out of the stories or put them into the little chapters of the first edition of the "*Celtic Twilight*", and that is how I began to write in the Irish vein.

Then I went to London to make my living, and though I spent a part of every year in Ireland and tried to keep the old life in my memory by reading every country tale I could find in books or old newspapers, I began to forget the true countenance of country life. The old tales were still alive for me, in my mind, but with a new, strange, half-unreal life, as if in a wizard's glass, until after when I had finished "*The Secret Rose*", and was halfway through "*The Wind among the Reeds*", a wise woman in her trance told me that my inspiration was from the moon, and that I should always live close to water, for my work was getting too full of those little jewelled thoughts that come from the sun and have no nation. I have no need to turn to my books of astrology to know that the common people are under the moon, or to Porphyry to remember the image-making power of the waters. Nor did I doubt the entire truth of what she said to me, for my head was full of fables that I had no lack of the knowledge and emotion to write. Then you brought me with you to your friends in the cottages, and to talk to old wise men on Slieve Echtge. When we gathered together, or you gathered for me, a great number of stories and traditional beliefs. You taught me to understand again, and much more fully than before, the true countenance of country life.

One night I had a dream, almost as distinct as a vision, of a cottage where there was well-being and firelight and talk of a marriage, and into the room of that cottage there came an old woman in a long cloak. She was Irish herself, that Cathleen ni Houlihan for whom so many songs have been written and about whom so many stories have been told and for whose sake so many have gone to their death. I thought if I could write this out as a little play I could make others see my dream as I had seen it, but I could not get

ut of that high window of dramatic verse, and in spite of all you had done
r me I had not the country speech. One has to live among the people, like
ou, of whom an old man said in my hearing, "She has been a serving-maid
mong us", before one can think the thoughts of the people and speak with
eir tongue. We turned my dream into the little play, "Cathleen ni Houlihan",
and when we gave it to the little theatre in Dublin and found that the working-
people liked it, you helped me to put my other dramatic fables into speech.
ome of these have already been acted, but some may not be acted for a long
me; but all seem to me, though they were but part of a summer's work, to
ve more of that countenance of country life than anything I have done since
was a boy.

The collaboration of Yeats and Lady Gregory was of slow growth, beginning
a mere suggestion on the part of Lady Gregory who had, at the beginning, the
s rather than the technique, and increasing until she did her full share in the
x. As she says, in her "Our Irish Theatre", Yeats dictated most of "Diarmuid
Grania" to her, during the course of which she suggested, here and there, certain
ences. And in her modesty she confesses that when the time came for writing,
re there was nothing she "helped to fill spaces." This latter piece was re-
ten by both of them under the title of "The Unicorn from the Stars."

The next piece of collaborative work was "Cathleen ni Houlihan"; and unre-
edly Lady Gregory declares that "we wrote it together." Mr. Reid says
"The wording of the greater part of the dialogue is either suggested by her or
ated from her." In the course of an article, published in *The Fortnightly Re-*
and entitled "An Uncommercial Theatre", Stephen Gwynn writes:

It is necessary to explain for English readers that Cathleen ni Houlihan
as one of the names which poets in the eighteenth century used to cloak, in
e disguise of love-songs, their forbidden passion for Ireland; that the "Shan
n Voecht," or "Poor Old Woman," was another of these names; and that
illala, near which, in 1798, is laid the scene of Mr. Yeats's play, is the place
ere Humbert's ill-starred but glorious expedition made its landing. But
ere was no need to tell all this to the Dublin audience.

Readers who wish first-hand impressions of the opening performance of "Cath-
ni Houlihan", as first played at St. Theresa's Hall, in Dublin, with W. G. Fay
e old countryman and Maude Gonne as *Cathleen*, should turn to George Moore's
é." The sheer delicacy and beauty of the mystic symbolism in this play, to
h was added a national strain which gave to the piece some political significance,
its two dominant characteristics. The Irish audiences, while recognizing the
ry and beauty of the dialogue as literature, were resentful of the application of
legend to Irish condition, and they were as hot-headed in their writing of pam-
ts against it as they were in hurling anathemas against "The Playboy of the
tern World."

Yet this play will last as long as the Irish Theatre. It has not the moral deli-
of "The Hour-Glass", nor the fragile poetic beauty of "The Land of the Heart's
re." But there is a dramatic quality to it which no amount of symbolism can
cloud. In America, "Cathleen ni Houlihan" was first seen during 1904, with
Margaret Wycherly in the leading rôle. In fact to that actress America owes
arly introduction to the Irish Theatre.

In the study of William Butler Yeats one has to understand his dramatic and his interest in different aspects of the poetic drama. His prose writings are a source of such information. In "The Cutting of an Agate" we have his laws of theatre. In his "Advice to Playwrights Who Are Sending Plays to the A. R. C. Dublin", contained in his "Ideas of Good and Evil", we are given first-hand policies governing the running of the theatre — policies more fully outlined in his little magazines. In his collected poetic works, a statement of principles concerning the National Theatre Society will likewise be suggestive. You will find as much of Yeats in his essays on Synge and in his critical judgments of William Blake as in his will of Synge and Blake themselves. In fact, no man writing for the Irish Theatre is quite so personal, so autobiographical, so dependent upon personal experience as is Yeats himself. Lady Gregory and Synge might depend on environmental conditions, but in the writing of their plays they are more apt to dissociate them from the material with which they are dealing. Filmy and beautiful in texture, highly sensitive and rich in imagination, the Yeats plays, or at least some of them, will be seen wherever Irish plays are given. But as permanent theatre contributions, they are not as high examples of dramaturgy as are the few one-act plays written by Synge.

CATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN

By W. B. YEATS

COPYRIGHT, 1904, 1908,

By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Reprinted from "The Unicorn from the Stars and Other Plays," by permission of the author, Mr. W. B. Yeats, and the publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York.

CHARACTERS

PETER GILLANE

MICHAEL GILLANE *his son, going to be married*

PATRICK GILLANE *a lad of twelve, Michael's brother*

BRIDGET GILLANE *Peter's wife*

DELIA CAHEL *engaged to Michael*

THE POOR OLD WOMAN

NEIGHBOURS

CATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN

SCENE. — Interior of a cottage close to Killala, in 1798. BRIDGET is standing at a table undoing a parcel. PETER is sitting at one side of the fire, PATRICK at the other

PETER. What is that sound I hear?

PATRICK. I don't hear anything. *[He listens]* I hear it now. It's like cheering. *[He goes to the window and looks out]* I wonder what they are cheering about. I don't see anybody.

PETER. It might be a hurling match.

PATRICK. There's no hurling to-day. It must be down in the town the cheering is.

BRIDGET. I suppose the boys must be having some sport of their own. Come over here, Peter, and look at Michael's wedding-clothes.

PETER *[shifts his chair to table]*. Those are grand clothes, indeed.

BRIDGET. You hadn't clothes like that when you married me, and no coat to put on of a Sunday any more than any other day.

PETER. That is true, indeed. We never thought a son of our own would be wearing a suit of that sort for his wedding, or have so good a place to bring his wife to.

PATRICK *[who is still at the window]*. There's an old woman coming down the road. I don't know, is it here she's coming?

BRIDGET. It will be a neighbour coming to hear about Michael's wedding. Can you see who it is?

PATRICK. I think it is a stranger, but she's not coming to the house. She's turned into the gap that goes down where Murteen and his sons are shearing sheep. *[He turns towards BRIDGET]* Do you remember what Winny of the Cross Roads was saying the other night about the strange woman that goes through the country whatever time there's war or trouble coming?

BRIDGET. Don't be bothering us about Winny's talk, but go and open

the door for your brother. I hear him coming up the path.

PETER. I hope he has brought Delia's fortune with him safe, for fear her people might go back on the bargain and I after making it. Trouble enough I had making it.

[PATRICK opens the door and MICHAEL comes in]

BRIDGET. What kept you, Michael? We were looking out for you this long time.

MICHAEL. I went round by the priest's house to bid him be ready to marry us to-morrow.

BRIDGET. Did he say anything?

MICHAEL. He said it was a very nice match, and that he was never better pleased to marry any two in his parish than myself and Delia Cahel.

PETER. Have you got the fortune, Michael?

MICHAEL. Here it is.

[He puts bag on table and goes over and leans against the chimney-jamb. BRIDGET, who has been all this time examining the clothes, pulling the seams and trying the lining of the pockets, etc., puts the clothes on the dresser]

PETER *[getting up and taking the bag in his hand and turning out the money]*. Yes, I made the bargain well for you, Michael. Old John Cahel would sooner have kept a share of this awhile longer. "Let me keep the half of it till the first boy is born," says he. "You will not," says I. "Whether there is or is not a boy, the whole hundred pounds must be in Michael's hands before he brings your daughter in the house." The wife spoke to him then, and he gave in at the end.

BRIDGET. You seem well pleased to be handling the money, Peter.

PETER. Indeed, I wish I had had the luck to get a hundred pounds, or twenty pounds itself, with the wife I married.

BRIDGET. Well, if I didn't bring

much I didn't get much. What had you the day I married you but a flock of hens and you feeding them, and a few lambs and you driving them to the market at Ballina? [*She is vexed and bangs a jug on the dresser*] If I brought no fortune, I worked it out in my bones, laying down the baby, Michael that is standing there now, on a stook of straw, while I dug the potatoes, and never asking big dresses or anything but to be working.

PETER. That is true, indeed.

[*He pats her arm*]

BRIDGET. Leave me alone now till I ready the house for the woman that is to come into it.

PETER. You are the best woman in Ireland, but money is good, too. [*He begins handling the money again and sits down*] I never thought to see so much money within my four walls. We can do great things now we have it. We can take the ten acres of land we have a chance of since Jamsie Dempsey died, and stock it. We will go to the fair of Ballina to buy the stock. Did Delia ask any of the money for her own use, Michael?

MICHAEL. She did not, indeed. She did not seem to take much notice of it, or to look at it at all.

BRIDGET. That's no wonder. Why would she look at it when she had yourself to look at, a fine, strong young man? It is proud she must be to get you, a good steady boy that will make use of the money, and not be running through it or spending it on drink like another.

PETER. It's likely Michael himself was not thinking much of the fortune either, but of what sort the girl was to look at.

MICHAEL [*coming over towards the table*]. Well, you would like a nice comely girl to be beside you, and to go walking with you. The fortune only lasts for a while, but the woman will be there always. [*Cheers*]

PATRICK [*turning round from the window*]. They are cheering again down in the town. Maybe they are landing horses from Enniserone. They do be cheering when the horses take the water well.

MICHAEL. There are no horses in it. Where would they be going and no fair at hand? Go down to the town, Patrick, and see what is going on.

PATRICK [*opens the door to go out, but stops for a moment on the threshold*]. Will

Delia remember, do you think, to let the greyhound pup she promised when she would be coming to the house?

MICHAEL. She will surely.

[*PATRICK goes out, leaving the door open*]

PETER. It will be Patrick's turn to be looking for a fortune, but he will find it so easy to get it and he will have a place of his own.

BRIDGET. I do be thinking sometimes, now things are going so well with us, and the Cahels such a good bargain in the district, and Delia's own money, a priest, we might be put in the way of making Patrick a priest some day, but he is so good at his books.

PETER. Time enough, time enough, you have always your head full of plans, Bridget.

BRIDGET. We will be well able to give him learning, and not to send him trampling the country like a scholar that lives on charity. [*Cheers*]

MICHAEL. They're not done cheering yet.

[*He goes over to the door and stands there for a moment, putting his hand to shade his eyes*]

BRIDGET. Do you see anything?

MICHAEL. I see an old woman coming up the path.

BRIDGET. Who is it, I wonder? It must be the strange woman Patrick told me of awhile ago.

MICHAEL. I don't think it's one of the neighbours anyway, but she has a black cloak over her face.

BRIDGET. It might be some woman heard we were making ready for the wedding and came to look for a share.

PETER. I may as well put the money out of sight. There is no use leaving it out for every stranger to look at.

[*He goes over to a large box in the corner, opens it, and puts the money bag in and fumbles at the lock*]

MICHAEL. There she is, fast. [*An OLD WOMAN passes the window slowly; she looks at MICHAEL as she passes*] I'd sooner a stranger came to the house the night before the wedding.

BRIDGET. Open the door, Michael, don't keep the poor woman waiting.

[*The OLD WOMAN comes in. MICHAEL stands aside to make way for her*]

OLD WOMAN. God save all here.

PETER. God save you kindly!

OLD WOMAN. You have good shelter here.

PETER. You are welcome to whatever shelter we have.

BRIDGET. Sit down there by the fire and welcome.

OLD WOMAN [*warming her hands*]. There is a hard wind outside.

[MICHAEL *watches her curiously from the door*. PETER *comes over to the table*]

PETER. Have you travelled far today?

OLD WOMAN. I have travelled far, very far; there are few have travelled so far as myself, and there's many a one that doesn't make me welcome. There was one that had strong sons I thought were friends of mine, but they were shearing their sheep, and they wouldn't listen to me.

PETER. It's a pity indeed for any person to have no place of their own.

OLD WOMAN. That's true for you indeed, and it's long I'm on the roads since I first went wandering.

BRIDGET. It is a wonder you are not worn out with so much wandering.

OLD WOMAN. Sometimes my feet are tired and my hands are quiet, but there is no quiet in my heart. When the people see me quiet, they think old age has come on me and that all the stir has gone out of me. But when the trouble is on me I must be talking to my friends.

BRIDGET. What was it put you wandering?

OLD WOMAN. Too many strangers in the house.

BRIDGET. Indeed you look as if you'd had your share of trouble.

OLD WOMAN. I have had trouble indeed.

BRIDGET. What was it put the trouble on you?

OLD WOMAN. My land that was taken from me.

PETER. Was it much land they took from you?

OLD WOMAN. My four beautiful green fields.

PETER. [*Aside to BRIDGET*] Do you think could she be the widow Casey that was put out of her holding at Kilglass while ago?

BRIDGET. She is not. I saw the widow Casey one time at the market in Ballina, a stout fresh woman.

PETER. [*To OLD WOMAN*] Did you hear a noise of cheering, and you coming up the hill?

OLD WOMAN. I thought I heard the noise I used to hear when my friends came to visit me.

[*She begins singing half to herself*]

I will go cry with the woman,
For yellow-haired Donough is dead,
With a hempen rope for a neckcloth,
And a white cloth on his head, —

MICHAEL [*coming from the door*]. What is that you are singing, ma'am?

OLD WOMAN. Singing I am about a man I knew one time, yellow-haired Donough, that was hanged in Galway.

[*She goes on singing, much louder*]

I am come to cry with you, woman,
My hair is unwound and unbound;
I remember him ploughing his field,
Turning up the red side of the ground,

And building his barn on the hill
With the good mortared stone;
O! we'd have pulled down the gallows
Had it happened in Enniscrone!

MICHAEL. What was it brought him to his death?

OLD WOMAN. He died for love of me: many a man has died for love of me.

PETER. [*Aside to BRIDGET*] Her trouble has put her wits astray.

MICHAEL. Is it long since that song was made? Is it long since he got his death?

OLD WOMAN. Not long, not long. But there were others that died for love of me a long time ago.

MICHAEL. Were they neighbours of your own, ma'am?

OLD WOMAN. Come here beside me and I'll tell you about them. [MICHAEL *sits down beside her at the hearth*] There was a red man of the O'Donnells from the north, and a man of the O'Sullivans from the south, and there was one Brian that lost his life at Clontarf by the sea, and there were a great many in the west, some that died hundreds of years ago, and there are some that will die to-morrow.

MICHAEL. Is it in the west that men will die to-morrow?

OLD WOMAN. Come nearer, nearer to me.

BRIDGET. Is she right, do you think? Or is she a woman from beyond the world?

PETER. She doesn't know well what she's talking about, with the want and the trouble she has gone through.

BRIDGET. The poor thing, we should treat her well.

PETER. Give her a drink of milk and a bit of the oaten cake.

BRIDGET. Maybe we should give her something along with that, to bring her on her way. A few pence, or a shilling itself, and we with so much money in the house.

PETER. Indeed I'd not begrudge it to her if we had it to spare, but if we go running through what we have, we'll soon have to break the hundred pounds, and that would be a pity.

BRIDGET. Shame on you, Peter. Give her the shilling, and your blessing with it, or our own luck will go from us.

[PETER goes to the box and takes out a shilling]

BRIDGET. [To the OLD WOMAN] Will you have a drink of milk?

OLD WOMAN. It is not food or drink that I want.

PETER [offering the shilling]. Here is something for you.

OLD WOMAN. That is not what I want. It is not silver I want.

PETER. What is it you would be asking for?

OLD WOMAN. If anyone would give me help he must give me himself, he must give me all.

[PETER goes over to the table, starting at the shilling in his hand in a bewildered way, and stands whispering to BRIDGET]

MICHAEL. Have you no one to care you in your age, ma'am?

OLD WOMAN. I have not. With all the lovers that brought me their love, I never set out the bed for any.

MICHAEL. Are you lonely going the roads, ma'am?

OLD WOMAN. I have my thoughts and I have my hopes.

MICHAEL. What hopes have you to hold to?

OLD WOMAN. The hope of getting my beautiful fields back again; the hope of putting the strangers out of my house.

MICHAEL. What way will you do that, ma'am?

OLD WOMAN. I have good friends that will help me. They are gathering to help me now. I am not afraid. If they are put down to-day, they will get the upper hand to-morrow. [She gets up] I must be going to meet my friends. They are coming to help me, and I must be there to welcome them. I must call

the neighbours together to welcome them.

MICHAEL. I will go with you.

BRIDGET. It is not her friends have to go and welcome, Michael is the girl coming into the house have to welcome. You have plenty to do, it is food and drink you have to bring to the house. The woman is coming home is not coming with empty hands; you would not have an empty house before her. [To the WOMAN] Maybe you don't know, ma'am, that my son is going to be married to-morrow.

OLD WOMAN. It is not a man going to his marriage that I look to for help.

PETER. [To BRIDGET] Who is it, do you think, at all?

BRIDGET. You did not tell us the name yet, ma'am.

OLD WOMAN. Some call me the Old Woman, and there are some that call me Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan.

PETER. I think I knew someone with that name once. Who was it, I wonder? It must have been someone I knew when I was a boy. No, no, I remember hearing it in a song.

OLD WOMAN [who is standing in the doorway]. They are wondering where there were songs made for me; there have been many songs made for me, but I have heard one on the wind this morning. [She sings]

Do not make a great keening
When the graves have been dug to-morrow
Do not call the white-scarfed riders
To the burying that shall be to-morrow

Do not spread food to call strangers
To the wakes that shall be to-morrow;
Do not give money for prayers
For the dead that shall die to-morrow

they will have no need of prayers,
they will have no need of prayers.

MICHAEL. I do not know what song means, but tell me something you can do for you.

PETER. Come over to me, Michael.
MICHAEL. Hush, father, listen to her.

OLD WOMAN. It is a hard saying they take that help me. Many of the young are red-cheeked now will be white-cheeked; many that have been to walk the hills and the bogs and the rushes will be sent to walk hard st

in far countries; many a good plan will be broken; many that have gathered money will not stay to spend it; many a child will be born, and there will be no father at its christening to give it a name. They that had red cheeks will have pale cheeks for my sake; and for all that, they will think they are well paid.

[She goes out; her voice is heard outside singing]

They shall be remembered for ever,
They shall be alive for ever,
They shall be speaking for ever,
The people shall hear them for ever.

BRIDGET. *[To PETER]* Look at him, Peter; he has the look of a man that has got the touch. *[Raising her voice]* Look here, Michael, at the wedding-clothes. Such grand clothes as these are. You have a right to fit them on now; it would be a pity to-morrow if they did not fit. The boys would be laughing at you. Take them, Michael, and go into the room and fit them on.

[She puts them on his arm]

MICHAEL. What wedding are you talking of? What clothes will I be wearing to-morrow?

BRIDGET. These are the clothes you are going to wear when you marry Delia Cahel to-morrow.

MICHAEL. I had forgotten that.

[He looks at the clothes and turns towards the inner room, but stops at the sound of cheering outside]

PETER. There is the shouting come to our own door. What is it has happened?

[PATRICK and DELIA come in]

PATRICK. There are ships in the Bay; the French are landing at Killala.

[PETER takes his pipe from his mouth and his hat off, and stands up. The clothes slip from MICHAEL'S arm]

DELIA. Michael! *[He takes notice]* Michael! *[He turns towards her]* Why do you look at me like a stranger?

[She drops his arm. BRIDGET goes over towards her]

PATRICK. The boys are all hurrying down the hillsides to join the French.

DELIA. Michael won't be going to join the French.

BRIDGET. *[To PETER]* Tell him not to go, Peter.

PETER. It's no use. He doesn't hear a word we're saying.

BRIDGET. Try and coax him over to the fire.

DELIA. Michael! Michael! You won't leave me! You won't join the French, and we going to be married!

[She puts her arms about him; he turns towards her as if about to yield. OLD WOMAN'S voice outside]

They shall be speaking for ever,
The people shall hear them for ever.

[MICHAEL breaks away from DELIA and goes out]

PETER. *[To PATRICK, laying a hand on his arm]* Did you see an old woman going down the path?

PATRICK. I did not, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen.

THE WORKHOUSE WARD

(1908)

BY LADY GREGORY

LADY GREGORY

It was a year and three months after the War began that Lady Augusta Gregory made her first visit to America since the tour of the Irish Players through the United States. I emphasize this date because, in the interim between the two American visits, a change had come over Lady Gregory, with whom I had had the pleasure of many conversations. This change, it might be inferred, was due to the influence of many minds upon the Irish temperament during its successful tour of the United States when, on all sides, the Irish Theatre was criticized for its narrow parochialism and for its too insistent self-interest.

I am quoting some of the opinions expressed to me by Lady Gregory, in 1915, because they will emphasize certain facts regarding the Irish Theatre, and will call attention to certain spiritual changes in the Irish playwrights which may have a profound effect upon the Celtic renaissance after the War is over.

It would seem that in the five years between January 1, 1911, and November 1916, Lady Gregory has grown much sounder in her nationalism, building in her own imagination a larger destiny for Ireland than one would infer to be the destiny in the minds of most of the members of the Irish Theatre on their visit to America in 1911.

Take, for instance, her notions regarding the influence of art on the Irish nation. She said:

Sir Hugh Lane, my nephew, lost his life on the *Lusitania*. He was a director, at that time, of the National Gallery of Ireland, and he made the National Gallery his heir. Some of his finest pictures, the Titian of Baldassari, the great Rembrandt Portrait of a Woman, and a wonderful Goya, were turned over immediately to the nation. While it is popularly thought that he took away from the collection many modern French pictures, and bequeathed them to the National Gallery of England, a codicil to his will shows that he had revoked this bequest and given the collection to Dublin on condition that a gallery be especially built for it within five years. If Dublin comes into possession of the numerous Manets, Renoirs, Courbets, and Rousseaus, then Dublin will become in a day one of the chief art centres of Europe.

This is a broader reaching out of Ireland to compete with the rest of the world, for competition means interest in what one's neighbours are doing. Yet, despite this awakening to a world position, Lady Gregory will not relinquish her hold upon her condition.

Remember, [she declared] I am for parochialism in art. I preached it on my previous visit to this country when I was speaking of an American National Theatre. I often quote Whitman who believed in looking, not far off, but close at hand; there we find the best that is in us. Turgeneff once said, "Russia can do without you; but you cannot do without Russia."

I wrote "The Workhouse Ward" for three of our players who had, for various reasons, left our country. They were to strike out for themselves. I refused my manuscript because they said that it was too local, yet I find that of all my plays it is the one most popular in America. I have met many young ladies at the different universities, and they have told me how they have enjoyed giving performances of my plays. And when I have flattered and hoped they would praise my more idealistic pieces, I was invariably told that the play they liked most was "The Workhouse Ward."

If it was so local, as some have said, would it have that widespread interest?

There was an Irish poet who wrote Irish songs, a hundred years ago, and he used to say that he was a man who could stand at his own back door and speak for, and to, the four corners of the globe. Really, what we are after is humanity, and human nature is not very far off. We Irish may be a little too in touch with our local problems. We are never always right. The Irish themselves say there is much folly at times in their attitude; and yet, at the back of their attitude there is something of a very large and very ancient patriotism. And I believe such a patriotism is better than English trades-unionism, where members care more of the wages they are going to receive than of the country they should serve. The fortunate thing with us is that we have a deep feeling within us — idealism, let us call it — which no criticism from the outside can touch. And it is this idealism which makes our literary work take on a quality of universality. I do not believe that the local touches in our one-act plays make us parochial in the theatre, but that they make our plays aloof from life in general.

I am over here lecturing on "Laughter in Ireland." But I find that this is not the one quality not to be found in Ireland. If you examine Gaelic songs, you will note that they contain religious, political, even drinking sentiments, but there is nothing comic in them. It was after the legislative union with England that an English-speaking public came in; then Lovell wrote for them especially his comedy of the blundering Irish servant, and Lever came to the fore with his false comedies, and there arose a stream of Irish jokes, crystallizing into a comic impression of Irish character. It was an artificial creation, not true to life, but still the English people got into the habit of measuring Ireland through Irish jokes. The result of it all is this: that twenty years ago a school of Irish satirists arose, represented at their highest by Bernard Shaw, and so well represented in America by Mr. Dooley: and though the English people do not like the jokes of the satirists, this habit of theirs to laugh at the Irish cannot now be stopped, and so they are laughing at their own expense!

I really believe that one of the most distinct contributions of our Irish theatre has been that the largest output of our Irish humour has come in the plays of the young dramatists who gathered about our standard. The plays we have presented have served as a twofold purpose, and here it is that our parochialism stretches beyond our borders into a criticism of life in general. Ever ready to laugh at ourselves, we are as well laughing at human nature, like Molière.

This laughter is rich in character and so the spiritual point of view becomes universal. You may accuse us of narrowness, but when we interpret our parochialism in this broad way, where is our narrowness then?

This conversation is worth while quoting in full because it represents a liberal and rational attitude toward art than that expressed by Yeats.

It is doubtful whether we would know as much of Gaelic romance were it not for thoroughness with which Lady Gregory has reproduced for us the "Cuchulainn Fuirthemne" (1902), "Gods and Fighting Men" (1904), and "Book of Saints Sinners" (1908). In addition to which she has, likewise, produced "The Kiltartan Wonder Book" and "The Kiltartan History Book" (1910). As a translator, she has given us the "Kiltartan Molière" and versions of Sudermann and Goldoni. Those who would follow the dramatic career of Lady Gregory have five volumes of plays to turn to: "Seven Short Plays" (1909), "The Image" (1910), "New Comedies" (1913), and two collections of "Irish Folk History Tales" (1912). The first of the later comedies, written for the Irish Players, which followed her serious attempt in "Twenty-five", during 1903, was "Spreading the News." An analysis of these plays, most of which formed part of the Irish repertory when the Players toured America, shows them marked by innate humour and based on typical situations of Irish character. For our present purpose, we have selected "The Workhouse Ward" because of its representative Irish character. In her "Our Irish Theatre" is the following biographical account of "The Workhouse Ward":

As to "The Poorhouse", the idea came from a visit to Gort Workhouse one day when I heard that the wife of an old man, who had been long there, maimed by something, a knife I think, that she had thrown at him in a quarrel, had herself now been brought into the hospital. I wondered how they would meet, as enemies or as friends, and I thought it likely they would be glad to end their days together for old sake's sake. This is how I wrote down my fable: A sickene, ward of a workhouse; two beds containing the old men; they are quarrelling. Occupants of other invisible beds are heard saying, 'There they are at it again; they are always quarrelling.' They say the matron will be coming to call for order, but another says the matron has been sent for to see somebody who wants to remove one of the paupers. Both old men wish they could be moved from each other and have the whole ridge of the world between them. The fight goes on. One old man tells the other that he remembers the time he used to be stealing ducks, and he a boy at school. The other old man remembers the time his neighbour was suspected of going to Souper's school, etc., etc. They remember the crimes of each other's lives. They fight like two young whelps that go on fighting till they are two old dogs. At last they kick their pillows and throw them at each other. Other paupers (invisible) cheer and applaud. Then they take their porringers, pipes, prayer-books, or whatever is in reach, to hurl at each other. They lament the hard fate that has put them in the same ward for five years and in beds next each other for the last three months, and they after being enemies the whole of their lives. Suddenly a cry that the matron is coming. They settle themselves hurriedly. Each puts his enemy's pillow under his head and lies down. The matron comes with a countrywoman comfortably dressed. She embraces one old man. He is his sister. Her husband died from her lately and she is lonesome and doesn't like to think of her brother being in the workhouse. If he is bedridden himself, he would be company for her. He is delighted, asks what sort of house she has. She says, a good one, a nice kitchen, and he can be doing little jobs for her. He can be sitting in a chair beside the fire and stirring the stirabout for her and throwing a bit of food to the chickens when she is out in the field.

He asks when he can go. She says she has the chance of a lift for him neighbour's cart. He can come at once. He says he will make no delay, loud sob from the old man in the other bed. He says, 'Is it going away are, you that I knew through all my lifetime, and leaving me among strangers.' The first old man asks his sister if she will bring him too. She is indignant, says she won't. First old man says maybe he'd be foolish to go at all. Does he know if he'd like it. She says, he is to please himself; if he comes, she can easily get a husband, having, as she has, a nice way of life and three lambs going to the next market. The first man says, well, he goes; if she would bring the other old man, he would go. She turns her head angrily. Paupers in other beds call out she'll find a good husband among them. She pulls on her shawl scornfully to go away. She gives her brother one more chance; he says he won't go. She says good-bye and bad luck to him. She leaves. He says that man beyond would be lonesome without him to contradict him. The other man says he would not. The first man says, 'You want some one to be arguing with you always.' The second man says, 'I do not.' The first man says, 'You are at your lies again.' The second man puts up his pillow to heave at him again. Curtain falls on two men arming themselves with pillows."

I intended to write the full dialogue myself, but Mr. Yeats thought the Gaelic play more useful for the moment, and rather sadly I laid that plan to rest, the work upon Dr. Hyde. It was all for the best in the end, for the little play when we put it on at the Abbey, did not go very well. It seemed to run into loose ends, and we did not repeat it; nor did the Gaelic players like it well as "The Marriage" and "The Lost Saint." After a while, when the Fays had left us, I wanted a play that would be useful to them, and with Hyde's full leave I re-wrote the "Poorhouse" as "The Workhouse Ward." I had more skill by that time, and it was a complete re-writing, for the two men in the first play had been talking at an imaginary audience of other men in the ward. When this was done away with the dialogue became of a consistency more closely knit, more direct and personal, to the great advantage of the play, although it was rejected as "too local" by the players for whom it was written. The success of this set me to cutting down the number of persons in later plays until I wrote "Grania" with only three persons in it, and "Bogie Men" with only two. I may have gone too far, and have, I think, run up an intention I at one time had of writing a play for a man and a scarab only, but one has to go on with experiment or interest in creation fades, and so it is with me.

If, as some believe, each play contains a symbol, Lady Gregory has furnished for "The Workhouse Ward" in her notes:

I sometimes think the two scolding paupers are a symbol of ourselves, Ireland. . . . "It is better to be quarrelling than to be lonesome." They put, that great fighting race, when they were told they had been brought to the Pax Britannica and must give up war, gave themselves to opium in its stead, but Connacht has not yet planted its poppy gardens.

THE WORKHOUSE WARD

By LADY GREGORY

COPYRIGHT, 1909,

By LADY GREGORY.

Reprinted from "Seven Short Plays" by permission of the author, Lady Gregory, and by Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

All acting rights both professional and amateur are reserved by the author. For permission, apply to Samuel French, 28 West 38th Street, New York.

CHARACTERS

“The Workhouse Ward” was first produced at the Abbey Theatre, Du
April 20th, 1908, with the following cast:

MIKE McINERNEY	}	<i>Paupers</i>	Arthur S
MICHAEL MISKELL	}		Fred O'D
MRS. DONOHOE		<i>A Countrywoman</i>	Marie O'

THE WORKHOUSE WARD

SCENE. — *A ward in Cloon Workhouse.*
The two old men in their beds.

MICHAEL MISKELL. Isn't it a hard day, Mike McInerney, myself and myself to be left here in the bed, and the feast day of Saint Colman, and the rest of the ward attending on the Mass.

MIKE McINERNEY. Is it sitting up by the hearth you are wishful to be, Michael Miskell, with cold in the shoulders and with speckled shins? At you rise up so, and you well able to do it, not like myself that has pains the same as tin-tacks within in my side.

MICHAEL MISKELL. If you have pains within in your inside there is no way to see it or know of it the way they can see my own knees that are swelled with the rheumatism, and my hands that are twisted in ridges the same as old cabbage stalk. It is easy to be talking about soreness and about pains, but they maybe not to be in it at all.

MIKE McINERNEY. To open me and analyse me you would know what it is of a pain and a soreness I have in my heart and in my chest. But I'm not one like yourself to be cursing and crying and tormenting the time the cows are at hand, thinking to get a larger share than myself of the nourishment and of the milk.

MICHAEL MISKELL. That's the way I do be picking at me and faulting. I had a share and a good share in my early time, and it's well you know that, and the both of us reared in Skehanagh.

MIKE McINERNEY. You may say that, indeed, we are both of us reared in Skehanagh. Little wonder you to be good nourishment the time we were both rising, and you bringing away the rabbits out of the snare.

MICHAEL MISKELL. And you didn't bring away my own eels, I suppose, I suppose after spearing in the Turlough?

Selling them to the nuns in the convent you did, and letting on they to be your own. For you were always a cheater and a schemer, grabbing every earthly thing for your own profit.

MIKE McINERNEY. And you were no grabber yourself, I suppose, till your land and all you had grabbed wore away from you!

MICHAEL MISKELL. If I lost it itself, it was through the crosses I met with and I going through the world. I never was a rambler and a cardplayer like yourself, Mike McInerney, that ran through all and lavished it unknown to your mother!

MIKE McINERNEY. Lavished it, is it? And if I did was it you yourself led me to lavish it or some other one? It is on my own floor I would be to-day and in the face of my family, but for the misfortune I had to be put with a bad next door neighbour that was yourself. What way did my means go from me is it? Spending on fencing, spending on walls, making up gates, putting up doors, that would keep your hens and your ducks from coming in through starvation on my floor, and every four-footed beast you had from preying and trespassing on my oats and my man's golds and my little lock of hay!

MICHAEL MISKELL. O to listen to you! And I striving to please you and to be kind to you and to close my ears to the abuse you would be calling and letting out of your mouth. To trespass on your crops is it? It's little temptation there was for my poor beasts to ask to cross the mering. My God Almighty! What had you but a little corner of a field!

MIKE McINERNEY. And what do you say to my garden that your two pigs had destroyed on me the year of the big tree being knocked, and they making gaps in the wall.

MICHAEL MISKELL. Ah, there does be a great deal of gaps knocked in a twelvemonth. Why wouldn't they be

knocked by the thunder, the same as the tree, or some storm that came up from the west?

MIKE McINERNEY. It was the west wind, I suppose, that devoured my green cabbage? And that rooted up my Champion potatoes? And that ate the gooseberries themselves from off the bush?

MICHAEL MISKELL. What are you saying? The two quietest pigs ever I had, no way wicked and well ringed. They were not ten minutes in it. It would be hard for them eat strawberries in that time, let alone gooseberries that's full of thorns.

MIKE McINERNEY. They were not quiet, but very ravenous pigs you had that time, as active as a fox they were, killing my young ducks. Once they had blood tasted you couldn't stop them.

MICHAEL MISKELL. And what happened myself the fair day of Esserkelly, the time I was passing your door? Two brazened dogs that rushed out and took a piece of me. I never was the better of it or of the start I got, but wasting from then till now!

MIKE McINERNEY. Thinking you were a wild beast they did, that had made his escape out of the travelling show, with the red eyes of you and the ugly face of you, and the two crooked legs of you that wouldn't hardly stop a pig in a gap. Sure any dog that had any life in it at all would be roused and stirred seeing the like of you going the road!

MICHAEL MISKELL. I did well taking out a summons against you that time. It is a great wonder you not to have been bound over through your lifetime, but the laws of England is queer.

MIKE McINERNEY. What ailed me that I did not summons yourself after you stealing away the clutch of eggs I had in the barrel, and I away in Ardahan searching out a clocking hen.

MICHAEL MISKELL. To steal your eggs is it? Is that what you are saying now? [*Holds up his hands*] The Lord is in heaven, and Peter and the saints, and yourself that was in Ardahan that day put a hand on them as soon as myself! Isn't it a bad story for me to be wearing out my days beside you the same as a spancelled goat. Chained I am and tethered I am to a man that is ramsacking his mind for lies!

MIKE McINERNEY. If it is a bad

story for you, Michael Miskell, worse story again for myself. A to be next and near me through whole of the four quarters of the world I never heard there to be any greater on the Miskells as there was on my race and name.

MICHAEL MISKELL. You do not know it? Well, you could hear it if you had but ears to hear it. 'Go across Lisheen Crannagh and down to the sea and to Newtown Lynch and to the mills of Duras and you'll find a Miskell and as far as Dublin!

MIKE McINERNEY. What is it? Crannagh and the mills of Duras? Look at all my own generation are buried at the Seven Crosses. And how many generations of Miskells are buried in it? Answer that!

MICHAEL MISKELL. I tell you for the wheat that was to be sown would be more side cars and more common cars at my father's funeral (rest his soul!) than at any funeral that left your own door. And as for your mother, she was a Cuffe from Claregalway, and it's she had the purer blood.

MIKE McINERNEY. And what do you say to the banshee? Isn't it she to have knowledge of the ancient times? Was ever she heard to screech and cry for the Miskells? Or for the Hynes, the Foxes, the Faheys, the Dooley, the McInerneys. It is of the nature of the banshee she is I am thinking of, ing them the same as a king's champion.

MICHAEL MISKELL. It is a banshee not to be crying for you at this minute, and giving you a warning to quit your lies and your contradictions, your arguing and your contrary, for there is no one under the rising sun could stand you. I tell you you are not behaving as in the presence of the Lord!

MIKE McINERNEY. Is it wishful thinking my death you are? Let it come when it meet me now and welcome so long as it will part me from yourself! And I would kiss the book on my death and have one request only to be granted, and I leaving it in my will, it is that I would request, nine furrows of the plough, nine ridges of the hills, nine walls to the ocean to be put between you and my own grave the time we are laid in the ground!

MICHAEL MISKELL. Amen to that! The ridges, is it? No, but let the whole of the world separate us till the day of Judgment! I would not be laid out for you at the Seven Churches, I to Ireland without a divide!

MIKE MCINERNEY. And after that in! I'd sooner than ten pound in hand, I to know that my shadow and my ghost will not be knocking out with your shadow and your ghost, the both of us waiting our time. I'd sooner be delayed in Purgatory! Now, have you anything to say?

MICHAEL MISKELL. I have everything to say, if I had but the time to it!

MIKE MCINERNEY *[sitting up]*. Let me up out of this till I'll choke you!

MICHAEL MISKELL. You scolding over you!

MIKE MCINERNEY *[shaking his fist at him]*. Wait a while!

MICHAEL MISKELL *[shaking his fist]*. Wait a while yourself!

MRS. DONOHUE *comes in with a parcel. She is a countrywoman with a frilled cap and a shawl. She stands still a minute. The two old men lie down and compose themselves]*

MRS. DONOHUE. They bade me come up here by the stair. I never was in this place at all. I don't know am I right. Which now of the two of ye is like McInerney?

MIKE MCINERNEY. Who is it is calling me by my name?

MRS. DONOHUE. Sure amn't I your sister, Honor McInerney that was, that now Honor Donohoe.

MIKE MCINERNEY. So you are, I believe. I didn't know you till you showed anear me. It is time indeed for me to come see me, and I in this place a year or more. Thinking me to be no credit to you, I suppose, among that name of the Donohoes. I wonder they would give you leave to come ask am I living yet or dead?

MRS. DONOHUE. Ah, sure, I buried the whole string of them. Himself was the last to go. *[Wipes her eyes]* The old man was praised he got a fine natural death. Sure we must go through our losses. And he got a lovely funeral; would delight you to hear the priest telling the Mass. My poor John Donohoe! A nice clean man, you wouldn't but be fond of him. Very

severe on the tobacco he was, but he wouldn't touch the drink.

MIKE MCINERNEY. And is it in Curranroe you are living yet?

MRS. DONOHUE. It is so. He left all to myself. But it is a lonesome thing the head of a house to have died!

MIKE MCINERNEY. I hope that he has left you a nice way of living?

MRS. DONOHUE. Fair enough, fair enough. A wide lovely house I have; a few acres of grass land . . . the grass does be very sweet that grows among the stones. And as to the sea, there is something from it every day of the year, a handful of periwinkles to make kitchen, or cockles maybe. There is many a thing in the sea is not decent, but cockles is fit to put before the Lord!

MIKE MCINERNEY. You have all that! And you without ere a man in the house?

MRS. DONOHUE. It is what I am thinking, yourself might come and keep me company. It is no credit to me a brother of my own to be in this place at all.

MIKE MCINERNEY. I'll go with you! Let me out of this! It is the name of the McInerneys will be rising on every side!

MRS. DONOHUE. I don't know. I was ignorant of you being kept to the bed.

MIKE MCINERNEY. I am not kept to it, but maybe an odd time when there is a colic rises up within me. My stomach always gets better the time there is a change in the moon. I'd like well to draw anear you. My heavy blessing on you, Honor Donohoe, for the hand you have held out to me this day.

MRS. DONOHUE. Sure you could be keeping the fire in, and stirring the pot with the bit of Indian meal for the hens, and milking the goat and taking the tacklings off the donkey at the door; and maybe putting out the cabbage plants in their time. For when the old man died the garden died.

MIKE MCINERNEY. I could to be sure, and be cutting the potatoes for seed. What luck could there be in a place and a man not to be in it? Is that now a suit of clothes you have brought with you?

MRS. DONOHUE. It is so, the way you will be tasty coming in among the neighbours at Curranroe.

MIKE McINERNEY. My joy you are! It is well you earned me! Let me up out of this! [*He sits up and spreads out the clothes and tries on coat*] That now is a good frieze coat . . . and a hat in the fashion . . .

[*He puts on hat*]

MICHAEL MISKELL [*alarmed*]. And is it going out of this you are, Mike McInerney?

MIKE McINERNEY. Don't you hear I am going? To Curranroe I am going. Going I am to a place where I will get every good thing!

MICHAEL MISKELL. And is it to leave me here after you you will?

MIKE McINERNEY [*in a rising chant*]. Every good thing! The goat and the kid are there, the sheep and the lamb are there, the cow does be running and she coming to be milked! Ploughing and seed sowing, blossom at Christmas time, the cuckoo speaking through the dark days of the year! Ah, what are you talking about? Wheat high in hedges, no talk about the rent! Salmon in the rivers as plenty as turf! Spending and getting and nothing scarce! Sport and pleasure, and music on the strings! Age will go from me and I will be young again. Geese and turkeys for the hundreds and drink for the whole world!

MICHAEL MISKELL. Ah, Mike, is it truth you are saying, you to go from me and to leave me with rude people and with townspeople, and with people of every parish in the union, and they having no respect for me or no wish for me at all!

MIKE McINERNEY. Whist now and I'll leave you . . . my pipe [*hands it over*]; and I'll engage it is Honor Donohoe won't refuse to be sending you a few ounces of tobacco an odd time, and neighbours coming to the fair in November or in the month of May.

MICHAEL MISKELL. Ah, what signifies tobacco? All that I am craving is the talk. There to be no one at all to say out to whatever thought might be rising in my innate mind! To be lying here and no conversable person in it would be the abomination of misery!

MIKE McINERNEY. Look now, Honor. . . . It is what I often heard said, two to be better than one. . . . Sure if you had an old trouser was full of holes . . . or a skirt . . . wouldn't you put another in under it that might

be as tattered as itself, and the them together would make some of a decent show?

MRS. DONOHOE. Ah, what a saying? There is no holes in the I brought you now, but as soon as the day I spun it for himself.

MIKE McINERNEY. It is well thinking, Honor . . . I do be an odd time . . . any load I would it preys upon my side . . . and a man does be weak an odd time swelling in his knees . . . but of us together it's not likely it is one time we would fail. Bring the of us with you, Honor, and the of the castle of luck on you, and the of us together will make one good man!

MRS. DONOHOE. I'd like to know Is it queer in the head you are asking me to bring in a stranger man?

MICHAEL MISKELL. I am, ma'am, but an old neighbour I am. I had forecasted this asking I have asked it myself. Michael I am, that was in the next house in Skehanagh!

MRS. DONOHOE. For pity's sake Michael Miskell is it? That's again. Yourself and Mike that left fighting and scolding and at one another! Sparring at one like two young pups you were threatening one another after like grown dogs!

MIKE McINERNEY. All the time it was ever in the place it was did it. Sure his anger rises fast goes away like the wind. Bring out with myself now, Honor Donohoe and God bless you.

MRS. DONOHOE. Well, then, not bring him out, and I will not yourself out, and you not to learn sense. Are you making yourself to come?

MIKE McINERNEY. I am the maybe . . . it is a mean thing a man that is shivering into seven to go changing from place to place.

MRS. DONOHOE. Well, take your luck or leave it. All I asked was you from the hurt and the harm year.

MIKE McINERNEY. Bring the of us with you or I will not stir this.

MRS. DONOHOE. Give me be a fine suit so [*begins gathering*

hes], till I'll go look for a man of own!

MIKE McINERNEY. Let you go so, you are so unnatural and so disoblig-, and look for some man of your own, and help him! For I will not go with at all!

MRS. DONOHUE. It is too much time lost with you, and dark night waiting overtake me on the road. Let the of you stop together, and the back my hand to you. It is I will leave there the same as God left the Jews!

[She goes out. The old men lie down and are silent for a moment]

MICHAEL MISKELL. Maybe the house not so wide as what she says.

MIKE McINERNEY. Why wouldn't be wide?

MICHAEL MISKELL. Ah, there does a good deal of middling poor houses own by the sea.

MIKE McINERNEY. What would you ow about wide houses? Whatever t of a house you had yourself it was wide for the provision you had into

MICHAEL MISKELL. Whatever provision I had in my house it was whole- provision and natural provision. self and her periwinkles! Periwinkles is a hungry sort of food.

MIKE McINERNEY. Stop your im- dence and your chat or it will be the rse for you. I'd bear with my own ther and mother as long as any man uld, but if they'd vex me I would e them the length of a rope as soon another!

MICHAEL MISKELL. I would never ask at all to go eating periwinkles.

MIKE McINERNEY [sitting up]. Have you anyone to fight me?

MICHAEL MISKELL [whimpering]. I have not, only the Lord!

MIKE McINERNEY. Let you leave putting insults on me so, and death picking at you!

MICHAEL MISKELL. Sure I am saying nothing at all to displease you. It is why I wouldn't go eating periwinkles, I'm in dread I might swallow the pin.

MIKE McINERNEY. Who in the world wide is asking you to eat them? You're as tricky as a fish in the full tide!

MICHAEL MISKELL. Tricky is it! Oh, my curse and the curse of the four and twenty men upon you!

MIKE McINERNEY. That the worm may chew you from skin to marrow bone!

[Seizes his pillow]

MICHAEL MISKELL [seizing his own pillow]. I'll leave my death on you, you scheming bagabone!

MIKE McINERNEY. By cripes! I'll pull out your pin feathers!

[Throwing pillow]

MICHAEL MISKELL [throwing pillow]. You tyrant! You big bully you!

MIKE McINERNEY [throwing pillow and seizing mug]. Take this so, you stobbing ruffian you!

[They throw all within their reach at one another, mugs, prayer books, pipes, etc.]

[Curtain]

RIDERS TO THE SEA

(1904)

BY JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

(1871-1909)

THERE is something so personal about the career of Synge, his life seems to have been so full, and yet so unaccomplished in its work, that facts are lost in the detail of a fitting tribute. The contrasts in his activities are so violent and his accomplishments so many-sided, that his genius is the type enticing the biographer to research of the most intimate kind. To certain writers the task of recording the career of Synge is almost as consecrated as the task of the Stevenson lover who visits every place and locality with the hope of finding something new about his subject.

Synge was born in Newtown Little, near Rathfarnham, a suburb of Dublin, on April 16, 1871. He was educated in private schools, and between his fourteenth and seventeenth years had a tutor. Had one judged of his later career by his early tastes, one would have said that Synge was destined to be a naturalist. When he took up music and became more than proficient with the piano, the flute, and the violin, one would have said that he would continue his work and become a great Irish composer. For, as late as 1891, while at Trinity College, he studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, easily obtaining a scholarship in harmony and composition. In fact, after his graduation from Trinity, which he entered in 1888, studying under Doctor Traill, after taking all the honours he could in Hebrew and Latin, he determined to practise music as a profession, and went to Germany for that purpose. But before 1894 came to an end, Synge had changed his plans and determined to follow literature instead. This caused him to settle in Paris, in January, 1895. And from now on he spent much of his time between France and Ireland.

As a linguist, Synge was exceptionally proficient. Visiting Italy, in 1896, he learned Italian. And in 1897 he not only wrote prose and verse both in English and French, but he had planned a translation from the Italian of "The Little Flowers" of St. Francis of Assisi. His student nature never having deserted him, he planned for himself a comprehensive and exhaustive survey of Racine. It was in this mood that he met Yeats in 1899. Had it not been for this introduction, he probably would have continued his criticisms, and we would have had none of the excellent plays which were to follow his visit to the Aran Islands in September, 1900. This visit was the beginning of a series of visits in 1900, 1901, and 1902. A critic said:

He took with him his fiddle, his conjuring tricks, his camera, and penny whistle, and feared that they would get tired of him if he brought them nothing new.

His notes, which he began to gather during his second stay, were completed in Ireland, Dublin, and London, and were published in April, 1907.

Meanwhile, Synge had written two plays founded on stories he had heard in the

Aran Islands. One of these was entitled "The Shadow of the Glen" and the other "Riders to the Sea." As we have stated, Synge rode into reputation as a dramatist on the high wave of enthusiasm which was behind the establishment of the Irish Literary Theatre. "The Shadow of the Glen" was presented at the Molyneux Hall, Dublin, on October 8, 1903, and "Riders to the Sea" at the same place on January 25, 1904.¹ After these there came "The Tinker's Wedding", which was the first drama conceived by him, and begun in 1902, and "The Well of the Saints", written in 1903. During this winter of 1902-1903, Synge lived in London and then as quickly changed his abode to Paris, and to the wilds of Wick and Kerry. He seems to have had a wandering fever, and his impressions of Wick and Kerry were published in the *Manchester Guardian*, and are contained in the fourth volume of his Works. In this fourth volume may likewise be seen his impressions of Connemara, through which congested district Synge toured with Jack

As one of the three literary advisers to the Abbey Theatre, Synge's tenure of office lasted from its opening until the day of his death. In February, 1905, his play, "The Well of the Saints", was given, and in 1907 the famous "Playboy of the Western World."

The last year of his life was passed mostly in Dublin; he was busy re-writing "Deirdre of the Sorrows", unfinished at his death and published posthumously by Miss Yeats's Cuala Press. He died on March 24, 1909, at a private nursing home, and was buried in the family tomb in Dublin.

Lovers of Synge have eagerly scanned every poem and piece of prose of his that has been given for publication. His literary executors still have in their possession much valuable unpublished material, but we doubt whether anything that they hold in reserve will give us a fairer picture of Synge than that which, through the assiduous labours of Maurice Bourgeois, is contained in his volume of poems and researches.

John Masefield, in his article for the Dictionary of National Biography, writes that Synge "brought into Irish literature the gifts of detachment from topicality and the wild vitality of tragedy."

There is no doubt that Synge's "The Shadow of the Glen" and "Riders to the Sea" are striking examples of that literature which is built out of life stuff; they contain rich veins of tragic humour and religious fervour. He may, in his novels "The Aran Islands", have stressed the realistic vein which comes with a conscientious study of the people; but by nature he was too human, too responsive to the human in others, to be enamoured of a mere statistical account. The eternal note of sadness was that which tempered the observation of Synge, and, as P. F. Fenimore says, in his critical study of the dramatist, "He had the ability of wringing from the atmosphere almost patriarchal, the tragedy of a small place raised to the trumpet-call of the entire world."

The fields and the sea were his background, and if in "The Shadow of the Glen" we obtain a certain pastoral quality, in "Riders to the Sea" we are given as much of a *genre* picture as in Hermann Heijerman's Dutch play, "The Good Hope."

Bourgeois claims that Synge always told his friends "In the Shadow of the Glen" was composed before "Riders to the Sea"¹, but only just before. The two plays were practically finished by the end of 1902. Masefield writes that when he

¹ In M. Bourgeois's "John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre", 1913, p. 3. This is a complete stage history of the play.

read in London, in January, 1903, at the rooms of one who was always gently helpful to writers not yet sure of their root, "The Shadow" was complete "The Riders" not quite complete. "A lady [Lady Gregory] read the plays beautifully. Afterwards we all applauded. Synge learned his métier that. Until then all his work had been tentative and in the air. After that, he forward knowing what he could do."

There are some who believe that the influence of Pierre Loti on Synge was very pronounced. Bourgeois declares that it was conspicuously apparent in "Riders to the Sea." However that may be, we do know that this play embodies some of the ideal strain of Maeterlinck.

In his essay on "Synge and the Ireland of His Time", Yeats declares:

Once when I had been saying that though it seemed to me that a conventional descriptive passage encumbered the action at the moment of crisis, I read "The Shadow of the Glen" better than "Riders to the Sea," that is, for the nobility of its end, its mood of Greek tragedy, too passive in suffering; I had quoted from Matthew Arnold's introduction to "Empedocles on Staphylea", Synge answered, "It is a curious thing that 'The Riders to the Sea' succeeds with an English but not with an Irish audience, and 'The Shadow of the Glen', which is not liked by an English audience, is always liked in Ireland, though it is disliked there in theory." Since then "The Riders to the Sea" has grown into great popularity in Dublin, partly because, with the tactless instinct of an Irish mob, the demonstrators against "The Playboy", both in the press and in the theatre, where it began the evening, selected it for applause.

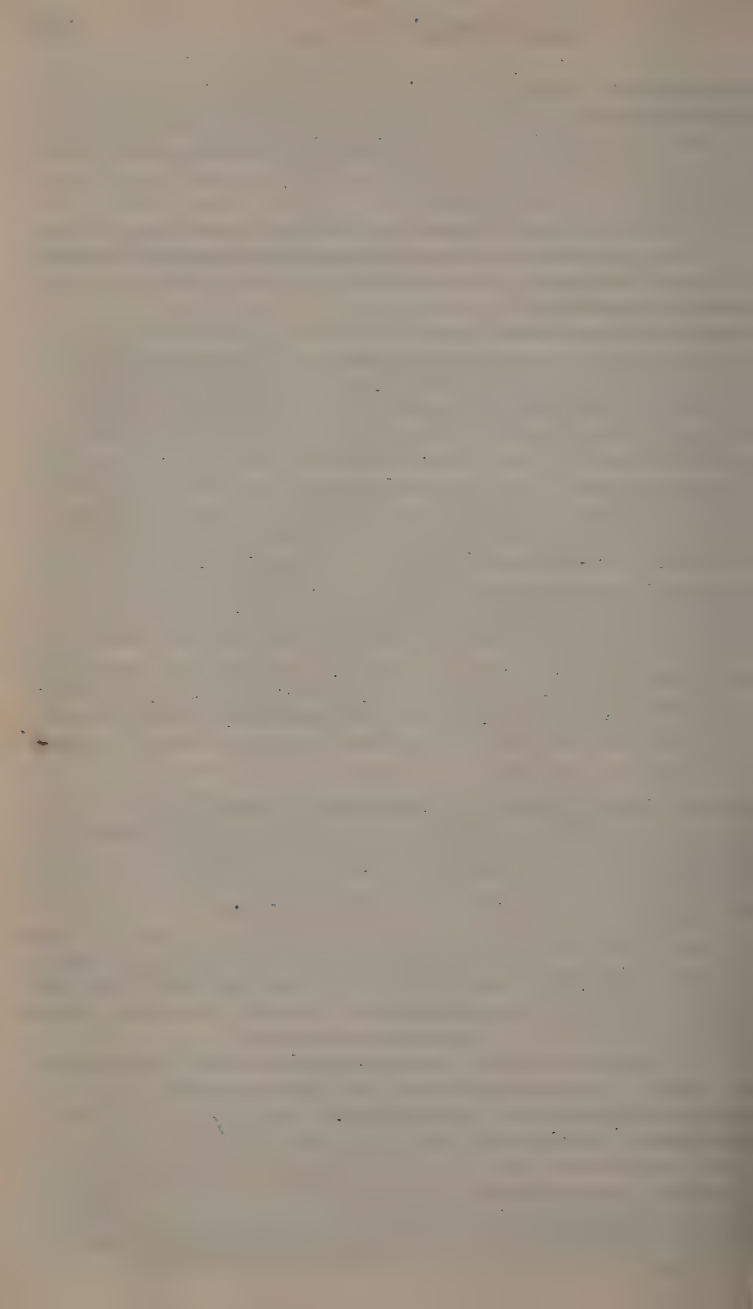
Bourgeois agrees that Loti's "Pêcheur d'Islande" and Hermann Heijerman's "The Good Hope" are behind "Riders to the Sea." He likewise quotes Padraic Kavanagh as having stated that Synge said to him that one of the reasons why he wrote "Riders to the Sea" was that he had personally begun to anticipate something of the sadness of old age and death.

"Riders to the Sea" [writes Howe] gets so fierce a momentum upon it that Synge's very regard for time is burned up in the flame; but here the appearance of a fault might easily have been avoided by a lesser dramatist, for it comes in only with Synge's refusal to "make talk." In its passionate simplicity, the tragedy becomes over-simplified and reality escapes it.

It is because reality escapes it that Synge's realism is mystical poetry. And at the close of the tragedy does not smite one with that personal reaction one gets on witnessing Heijerman's "The Good Hope", while the effect on the reader or observer is distinctly joyless and without active response, nevertheless a deeper knowledge of human nature is struck by Synge than by Heijerman.

It is not our place here to discuss the advance made by Synge in the technique of the one-act play. It is a study, however, none the less profitable, as is also to be seen from Synge's notebooks how a dramatist may shape material to his end.

Synge introduced into the Irish Drama a new subject and a new rhythm. His method seems to have been almost self-conscious in his scraping of humanity to the bone and building it up again through his own personality. James Huneker speaks of his clear, rich vibrant prose, and lauds his gypsy temperament. No dramatist, other than Synge, of the Irish Theatre, has given to the Irish Movement that vitality which will outlast the special Movement and mark it as great drama.



RIDERS TO THE SEA

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By J. M. SYNGE

COPYRIGHT, 1911,

By L. E. BASSETT.

Reprinted by permission of Messrs. John W. Luce & Company, Boston.

CHARACTERS

First performed at the Molesworth Hall, Dublin, February 25th, 1904

MAURYA	<i>an old woman</i>	Honor
BARTLEY	<i>her son</i>	W. G.
CATHLEEN	<i>her daughter</i>	Sarah
NORA	<i>a younger daughter</i>	Emma

MEN AND WOMEN

RIDERS TO THE SEA

NE. — *An Island off the West of Ireland.*

large kitchen, with nets, oil-skins, spinning wheel, some new boards standing by the wall, etc. CATHLEEN, *a girl of about twenty, finishes kneading cake, and puts it down in the pot-oven by the fire; then wipes her hands, and begins to spin at the wheel.* NORA, *a young girl, puts her head in at the door*

NORA *[in a low voice]*. Where is she?
CATHLEEN. She's lying down, God bless her, and may be sleeping, if she's

[NORA comes in softly, and takes a bundle from under her shawl]

CATHLEEN *[spinning the wheel rapidly]*. What is it you have?

NORA. The young priest is after giving them. It's a shirt and a plain king-worm they've got off a drowned man from the bog.

[CATHLEEN stops her wheel with a sudden movement, and leans out to listen]

NORA. We're to find out if it's Michael's they are, some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

CATHLEEN. How would they be Michael's, Nora. How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

NORA. The young priest says he's seen the like of it. "If it's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she'll be giving her death," says he, "with crying and lamenting."

[The door which NORA half closed is blown open by a gust of wind]

CATHLEEN *[looking out anxiously]*. You ask him would he stop Bartley this day with the horses to the way fair?

NORA. "I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute," says he, "with no son living."

CATHLEEN. Is the sea bad by the white rocks, Nora?

NORA. Middling bad, God help us. There's a great roaring in the west, and it's worse it'll be getting when the tide's turned to the wind. *[She goes over to the table with the bundle]* Shall I open it now?

CATHLEEN. Maybe she'd wake up on us, and come in before we'd done. *[Coming to the table]* It's a long time we'll be, and the two of us crying.

NORA *[goes to the inner door and listens]*. She's moving about on the bed. She'll be coming in a minute.

CATHLEEN. Give me the ladder, and I'll put them up in the turf-loft, the way she won't know of them at all, and maybe when the tide turns she'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east.

[They put the ladder against the gable of the chimney; CATHLEEN goes up a few steps and hides the bundle in the turf-loft. MAURYA comes from the inner room]

MAURYA *[looking up at CATHLEEN and speaking querulously]*. Isn't it turf enough you have for this day and evening?

CATHLEEN. There's a cake baking at the fire for a short space *[throwing down the turf]* and Bartley will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara.

[NORA picks up the turf and puts it round the pot-oven]

MAURYA *[sitting down on a stool at the fire]*. He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west.

He won't go this day, for the young priest will stop him surely.

NORA. He'll not stop him, mother, and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Pheety and Colum Shawn saying he would go.

MAURYA. Where is he itself?

NORA. He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I'm thinking it won't be long till he's here now, for the tide's turning at the green head, and the hooker's tacking from the east.

CATHLEEN. I hear some one passing the big stones.

NORA [*looking out*]. He's coming now, and he in a hurry.

BARTLEY [*comes in and looks round the room. Speaking sadly and quietly*]. Where is the bit of new rope, Cathleen, was bought in Connemara?

CATHLEEN [*coming down*]. Give it to him, Nora; it's on a nail by the white boards. I hung it up this morning, for the pig with the black feet was eating it.

NORA [*giving him a rope*]. Is that it, Bartley?

MAURYA. You'd do right to leave that rope, Bartley, hanging by the boards. [BARTLEY *takes the rope*] It will be wanting in this place, I'm telling you, if Michael is washed up to-morrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it's a deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God.

BARTLEY [*beginning to work with the rope*]. I've no halter the way I can ride down on the mare, and I must go now quickly. This is the one boat going for two weeks or beyond it, and the fair will be a good fair for horses I heard them saying below.

MAURYA. It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara.

[*She looks round at the boards*]

BARTLEY. How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days, and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

MAURYA. If it wasn't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a hundred horses, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand

horses against a son where there's son only?

BARTLEY [*working at the halter*]. CATHLEEN]. Let you go down this day, and see the sheep aren't jumping on the rye, and if the jobber says you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going.

MAURYA. How would the priest get a good price for a pig?

BARTLEY. [*To CATHLEEN*] The west wind holds with the last of the moon let you and Nora get up early enough for another cock for the cock. It's hard set we'll be from this day, no one in it but one man to work.

MAURYA. It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drowned with the rest. What way will I live among the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?

[BARTLEY *lays down the halter and takes off his old coat, and hangs it on a newer one of the flannel*]

BARTLEY. [*To NORA*] Is she coming to the pier?

NORA [*looking out*]. She's passing the green head and letting fall her net.

BARTLEY [*getting his purse and tobacco*]. I'll have half an hour's rest down, and you'll see me coming in two days, or in three days, or in four days if the wind is bad.

MAURYA [*turning round to the door and putting her shawl over her head*]. Isn't it a hard and cruel man to hear a word from an old woman she holding him from the sea?

CATHLEEN. It's the life of a man to be going on the sea, and you would listen to an old woman with nothing and she saying it over?

BARTLEY [*taking the halter*]. I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony behind me. . . . The blessing on you. [*He goes*]

MAURYA [*crying out as he is going out the door*]. He's gone now, God spare him, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now, and when the black mare is falling I'll have no son left me in the world.

CATHLEEN. Why wouldn't you tell him your blessing and he looking in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough on every one in this house with you sending him out with an unkind word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?

[MAURYA takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round]

NORA [turning towards her]. You're taking away the turf from the cake.

CATHLEEN [crying out]. The Son of God forgive us, Nora, we're after forcing his bit of bread.

[She comes over to the fire]

NORA. And it's destroyed he'll be taking till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up.

CATHLEEN [turning the cake out of the fire]. It's destroyed he'll be, surely. There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking for ever.

[MAURYA sways herself on her stool]

CATHLEEN [cutting off some of the cake and rolling it in a cloth; to MAURYA]. You go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing. I'll see him then and the dark word will be broken, and you can say "God bless you", the way he'll be easy in his bed.

MAURYA [taking the bread]. Will you be in it as soon as himself?

CATHLEEN. If you go now quickly.

MAURYA [standing up unsteadily]. I'll hard set I am to walk.

CATHLEEN [looking at her anxiously]. Give her the stick, Nora, or maybe it will slip on the big stones.

NORA. What stick?

CATHLEEN. The stick Michael brought from Connemara.

MAURYA [taking a stick]. NORA gives it to her. In the big world the old people are leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this world it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old.

[She goes out slowly. NORA goes over to the ladder]

CATHLEEN. Wait, Nora, maybe she'd come back quickly. She's that sorry, I'll help her, you wouldn't know the way she'd do.

NORA. Is she gone round by the bush?

CATHLEEN [looking out]. She's gone round. Throw it down quickly, for the dog knows when she'll be out of it again.

NORA [getting the bundle from the loft]. The young priest said he'd be passing tomorrow, and we might go down and talk to him below if it's Michael's they were.

CATHLEEN [taking the bundle]. Did you say what way they were found?

NORA [coming down]. "There were two men," says he, "and they rowing round with poteen before the cocks crowed, and the oar of one of them caught the body, and they passing the black cliffs of the north."

CATHLEEN [trying to open the bundle]. Give me a knife, Nora, the string's perished with the salt water, and there's a black knot on it you wouldn't loosen in a week.

NORA [giving her a knife]. I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

CATHLEEN [cutting the string]. It is surely. There was a man in here a while ago — the man sold us that knife — and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond, it would be seven days you'd be in Donegal.

NORA. And what time would a man take, and he floating?

[CATHLEEN opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking. They look at them eagerly]

CATHLEEN [in a low voice]. The Lord spare us, Nora! isn't it a queer hard thing to say if it's his they are surely?

NORA. I'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put the one flannel on the other. [She looks through some clothes hanging in the corner] It's not with them, Cathleen, and where will it be?

CATHLEEN. I'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning, for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it. [Pointing to the corner] There's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff. Give me that and it will do.

[NORA brings it to her and they compare the flannel]

CATHLEEN. It's the same stuff, Nora; but if it is itself aren't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway, and isn't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?

NORA [who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out]. It's Michael, Cathleen, it's Michael; God spare his soul, and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?

CATHLEEN [taking the stocking]. It's a plain stocking.

NORA. It's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up three score stitches, and I dropped four of them.

CATHLEEN [counts the stitches]. It's that number is in it. [Crying out] Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of

him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keep him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

NORA [*swinging herself round, and throwing out her arms on the clothes*]. And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher, but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

CATHLEEN [*after an instant*]. Tell me is herself coming, Nora? I hear a little sound on the path.

NORA [*looking out*]. She is, Cathleen. She's coming up to the door.

CATHLEEN. Put these things away before she'll come in. Maybe it's easier she'll be after giving her blessing to Bartley, and we won't let on we've heard anything the time he's on the sea.

NORA [*helping CATHLEEN to close the bundle*]. We'll put them here in the corner.

[*They put them into a hole in the chimney corner. CATHLEEN goes back to the spinning-wheel*]

NORA. Will she see it was crying I was?

CATHLEEN. Keep your back to the door the way the light 'll not be on you.

[*NORA sits down at the chimney corner, with her back to the door. MAURYA comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to her stool at the other side of the fire. The cloth with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other, and NORA points to the bundle of bread*]

CATHLEEN [*after spinning for a moment*]. You didn't give him his bit of bread?

[*MAURYA begins to keen softly, without turning round*]

CATHLEEN. Did you see him riding down? [*MAURYA goes on keening*]

CATHLEEN [*a little impatiently*]. God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you.

MAURYA [*with a weak voice*]. My heart's broken from this day.

CATHLEEN [*as before*]. Did you see Bartley?

MAURYA. I seen the fearfulest thing.

CATHLEEN [*leaves her wheel and looks out*]. God forgive you; he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

MAURYA [*starts, so that her shaft back from her head and shows her tossed hair. With a frightened look*]. The gray pony behind him.

CATHLEEN [*coming to the fire*]. Is it ails you, at all?

MAURYA [*speaking very slowly*]. I seen the fearfulest thing any time has seen, since the day Bridget seen the dead man with the child in his arms.

CATHLEEN AND NORA. Uah.

[*They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire*]

NORA. Tell us what it is you seen.

MAURYA. I went down to the well, and I stood there saying a prayer to myself. Then Bartley came, and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him. [*She puts her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes*] The Son of God spare us.

CATHLEEN. What is it you seen?

MAURYA. I seen Michael him.

CATHLEEN [*speaking softly*]. You seen not, mother; it wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being buried in the far north, and he's got a burial by the grace of God.

MAURYA [*a little defiantly*]. I seen him this day, and he riding galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say "stop speed you", but something choked my words in my throat. He went quickly; and "the blessing of God be on you", says he, and I could say no more. I looked up then, and I crying, and there was Michael on the gray pony, and there was Michael with it — with fine clothes on him, and fine shoes on his feet.

CATHLEEN [*begins to keen*]. I seen him destroyed we are from this day, and destroyed, surely.

NORA. Didn't the young priest say the Almighty God wouldn't leave a man destitute with no son living?

MAURYA [*in a low voice, but with a strong emphasis*]. It's little the like of him knows the sea. . . . Bartley will be lost, and let you call in Eamon and make a good coffin out of the white stone for I won't live after them. I've seen my husband, and husband's father, and sons in this house — six fine sons, though it was a hard birth I had every one of them and they come from the world — and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now the same as them. . . . There were Stephen

awn, were lost in the great wind, and and after in the Bay of Gregory of the Olden Mouth, and carried up the two them on the one plank, and in by that or.

[She pauses for a moment, the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half open behind them]

NORA *[in a whisper]*. Did you hear at, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise the north-east?

CATHLEEN *[in a whisper]*. There's me one after crying out by the sea-shore.

MAURYA *[continues without hearing anything]*. There was Sheamus and his ther, and his own father again, were at in a dark night, and not a stick or n was seen of them when the sun ent up. There was Patch after was owned out of a curagh that turned er. I was sitting here with Bartley, d he a baby, lying on my two knees, d I seen two women, and three omen, and four women coming in, d they crossing themselves, and not ying a word. I looked out then, and ere were men coming after them, and ey holding a thing in the half of a red and water dripping out of it — was a dry day, Nora — and leaving a ck to the door.

[She pauses again with her hand stretched out towards the door. It opens softly and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads]

MAURYA *[half in a dream, to CATHLEEN]*. Is it Patch, or Michael, or nat is it at all?

CATHLEEN. Michael is after being und in the far north, and when he is und there how could he be here in is place?

MAURYA. There does be a power of ung men floating round in the sea, d what way would they know if it is Michael they had, or another man e him, for when a man is nine days the sea, and the wind blowing, it's rd set his own mother would be to y what man was it.

CATHLEEN. It's Michael, God spare n, for they're after sending us a bit his clothes from the far north.

[She reaches out and hands MAURYA the clothes that be-

longed to MICHAEL. MAURYA stands up slowly, and takes them in her hands. NORA looks out]

NORA. They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

CATHLEEN *[in a whisper to the women who have come in]*. Is it Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. It is surely, God rest his soul.

[Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of BARTLEY, laid on a plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table]

CATHLEEN. *[To the women, as they are doing so]* What way was he drowned?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. The gray pony knocked him into the sea, and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks.

[MAURYA has gone over and kneelt down at the head of the table.

The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. CATHLEEN and NORA kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door]

MAURYA *[raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her]*. They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. *[To NORA]* Give me the Holy Water, Nora, there's a small sup still on the dresser.

[NORA gives it to her]

MAURYA *[drops MICHAEL'S clothes across BARTLEY'S feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him]*. It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long

nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking.

[*She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath*]

CATHLEEN. [*To an old man*] Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

THE OLD MAN [*Looking at the boards*]. Are there nails with them?

CATHLEEN. There are not, Colum; we didn't think of the nails.

ANOTHER MAN. It's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

CATHLEEN. It's getting old she is, and broken.

[*MAURYA stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of MICHAEL'S clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water*]

NORA [*in a whisper to CATHLEEN*]. She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael,

and would any one have the that?

CATHLEEN [*slowly and clearly*]. old woman will be soon tired with thing she will do, and isn't it nine herself is after crying and keening making great sorrow in the house?

MAURYA [*puts the empty cup downwards on the table, and lays hands together on BARTLEY'S*]. They're all together this time, an end is come. May the Almighty have mercy on Bartley's soul, an Michael's soul, and on the sou Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen Shawn [*bending her head*]; and may have mercy on my soul, Nora, an the soul of every one is left living the world.

[*She pauses, and the keen a little more loudly from women, then sinks away*]

MAURYA [*continuing*]. Michael a clean burial in the far north, by grace of the Almighty God. Ba will have a fine coffin out of the boards, and a deep grave surely. more can we want than that? No at all can be living for ever, an must be satisfied.

[*She kneels down again an curtain falls slowly*]

THOMAS MUSKERRY

(1910)

BY PADRAIC COLUM

PADRAIC COLUM

PADRAIC COLUM is one of the younger members of the Irish Players. He has, some years, resided in New York, content to publish his plays, to utter significant remarks regarding the trend of modern poetry, and to write poetry characteristic of the modern manner. His career, as a dramatist, runs parallel to that of Synge, and his work contains the usual amount of fervour towards religious and national questions, which characterizes the work of so many of his contemporaries. It would seem that there was something outside the general scheme of the National Theatre in the work of Padraic Colum; for the Abbey Theatre managers have allowed him to break from them and they have not always been cordial toward the merit of his dramas.

Much biographical data is to be had from a letter written the present editor to Mr. Colum. It runs as follows:

New York, January 3rd, 1918.

I was one of the foundation members of the Irish National Theatre, joining in 1903 a group whose prominent members were Mr. W. G. Fay, Mr. Frank Fay, and Mr. Dudley Digges (who is now in New York, as Mr. George Arliss's stage-manager). This group was recruited from certain Irish political societies, and it came into existence for the purpose of play production, after the last of their successive performances which the Irish Literary Theatre had given. The Irish Literary Theatre, let me remind you, had been brought into being by Mr. Yeats, Mr. Edward Martyn, and Mr. George Moore. Its object was to give a performance for one week in a Dublin Theatre. The plays given were written by Irishmen, Mr. Yeats himself, Mr. Martyn, and Mr. Moore in collaboration with Mr. Yeats.

The players were English actors, and it seemed impossible at the time to get Irish trained players. However, the little group to which I referred had a capable stage director in Mr. W. G. Fay, and a splendid elocutionist in Mr. F. Fay. These two men gave a fine training to the amateur players they had gathered around them, and, when the Irish Literary Theatre had given the last of their performances, Mr. Yeats found them capable of producing his play, "Cathleen ni Houlihan", and with this play and A. E.'s "Deirdre", the Irish National Theatre began. Mr. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and J. M. Synge joined the group. Some years afterwards, this original group split on a question of administration. Originally every member of the group had a voice in its policy. This made its management very unwieldy, and it was decided to abolish this voting power and to create a directorate of four, — Mr. Yeats, Lady Gregory, J. M. Synge, and W. G. Fay. I was amongst those who left the theatre on that occasion.

The Irish National Theatre had already produced two plays of mine, "Broken Soil", and "The Land." "Broken Soil" was afterwards put into a different

form and given the title of "The Fiddler's House." The play called "Thomas Muskerri" was to follow these two plays. I had projected a series of plays that was to have dealt with the various classes in Ireland, from the peasant to the intellectual. The first of the projected series was "The Land," which reached the middle classes with "Thomas Muskerri", which shows the life of small officials in a small town. It should have been called "The Workhouse Master", a title which would better fit its class conception, as you will see if you think of the other titles, "The Land" and "The Fiddler's House." Lady Gregory had already used "The Workhouse Ward" as a title, so rather than cause any confusion I dropped my original title.

After its first production in the Abbey Theatre, the play was attacked as putting forward a degraded type of Irish life. The weekly journal, *The Irishman*, spoke of "Muskerri" as a dangerous phase of Irish literature.

These three Irish plays of mine, "The Land", "The Fiddler's House", and "Thomas Muskerri", have for their motives the delineation of family life in Ireland. In each play an individual interest stands out as against the general life of the country. The tragedy in "Thomas Muskerri" arises from the fact that in the course of time with this family group, the old man's life is frustrated and ruined.¹

¹ Colum and Lord Dunsany at one time collaborated. The latter has written as follows to Mr. Edward Bierstadt: "Colum suggested that we should write a play together. I got out Plutarch and we read a bit together. We agreed we would kill Clitus, but we had no plot. I got started on an act and tried to get Colum started on another act, but I could not get him to begin. His instinct realized how futile was the suggestion which he had made and I had agreed to. Finally he asked me to leave him the killing of Clitus and to go on with the play. Well, at the pace I work, I very soon did all the rest, and I read it to Colum and he then generously released me from my promise to let him kill Clitus."

THOMAS MUSKERRY

By PADRAIC COLUM

COPYRIGHT, 1916,

By PADRAIC COLUM.

All rights reserved

"Thomas Muskerrey" is included in the volume of "Three Plays" by Padraic Colum, published by Little, Brown, & Company, and is fully protected by copyright. It must not be performed either by amateurs or professionals, without written permission. For such permission, and for the acting version with full stage instructions, apply to The Paget Dramatic Agency, 25 West 45th Street, New York.

CHARACTERS

THOMAS MUSKERRY	The Master of Garrisowen Workhouse
MRS. CRILLY	His Daughter
CROFTON CRILLY	His Son-in-law
ALBERT CRILLY	His Grandson
ANNA CRILLY	His Granddaughter
JAMES SCOLLARD	Thomas Muskerry's Successor
FELIX TOURNOUR	The Porter at Workhouse Lodge
MYLES GORMAN	A Blind Piper
CHRISTY CLARKE	A Boy reared in the Workhouse
SHANLEY }	Paupers in Workhouse
MICKIE CRIPES }	
AN OLD MAN }	

SCENE *Garrisowen, a town in the Irish Midlands.*

"Thomas Muskerry" was first produced on May 5th, 1910, by the Abbey Theater Company, at the Abbey Theater, Dublin, with the following cast:

THOMAS MUSKERRY	Arthur Sinclair
MRS. CRILLY	Sara Allgood
CROFTON CRILLY	J. M. Kerrigan
ALBERT CRILLY	Eric Gorman
ANNA CRILLY	Maire O'Neill
MYLES GORMAN	Fred O'Donoghue
FELIX TOURNOUR	Sydney Morris
JAMES SCOLLARD	J. A. O'Rourke
CHRISTY CLARKE	U. Wright
MICKIE CRIPES	Fred Rowland
TOM SHANLEY	Ambrose Power
AN OLD PAUPER	J. M. Kerrigan

THOMAS MUSKERRY

ACT I

Master's office in Garrisowen Workhouse. It is partly an office, partly a living room. To the right is a door opening on corridor, and in the back, left, a door leading to the Master's apartments. There is an iron stove down from back and towards right, and a big grandfather's clock back towards door of apartments. A basket armchair down from stove, and a wooden chair beside it. There is a desk against wall, left, and an office stool before it. Down from this desk a table on which is a closed desk. On table are books, papers, and files. On a wooden chair beside the armchair is a heap of newspapers and periodicals. There is a rack beside corridor door, and on rack a shawl, an old coat, a hat, and a bunch of big keys. In the corner, right, is a little cabinet, and on it a small mirror. Above door of apartments a picture of Daniel O'Connell. The grandfather's clock is ticking audibly. It is 8.45 P. M. The gas over desk is lighted]

CHRISTY CLARKE, a youth of about seventeen, is seated in the armchair reading a periodical. His clothes are threadbare, but brushed and clean. He looks studious, and has intellectual possibilities. The clock ticks on, the boy reads, but with little attention. At the corridor door there is a knocking. CHRISTY CLARKE turns slightly. The door opens, and a tall man in the ugly dress of a pauper is seen. The man is FELIX TOURNOUR. He carries in a bucket of coal. He performs this action like one who has acquired the habit of work under an overseer. He is an ugly figure in his pauper dress. His scanty beard is coal black. He has a wide mouth and discoloured teeth. His forehead is narrow and bony. He is about forty-five]

TOURNOUR [*in a harsh voice, after looking around*]. Is he not back yet?

CHRISTY [*without stirring*]. Is who not back yet?

TOURNOUR. The Master I'm talking about. I don't know where he does be going these evenings.

[*He shovels coal into the stove*]

CHRISTY. And what is it to you where he does be going?

TOURNOUR. Don't talk to me like that, young fellow. You're poorhouse rearing, even though you are a pet. Will he be sitting up here to-night, do you know?

CHRISTY. What's that to you whether he will or not?

TOURNOUR. If he's sitting up late he'll want more coal to his fire.

CHRISTY. Well, the abstracts will have to be finished to-night.

TOURNOUR. Then he will be staying up. He goes out for a walk in the evenings now, and I don't know where he does be going.

CHRISTY. He goes out for a walk in the country. [TOURNOUR *makes a leer of contempt*] Do you never go for a walk in the country, Felix Tourneur?

TOURNOUR. They used to take me out for walks when I was a little fellow, but they never got me out into the country since.

CHRISTY. I suppose, now that you're in the porter's lodge, you watch every one that goes up and down the road?

TOURNOUR. It gratifies me to do so — would you believe that now?

CHRISTY. You know a lot, Felix Tourneur.

TOURNOUR. We're told to advance in knowledge, young fellow. How long is Tom Muskerry the Master of Garrisowen Workhouse?

CHRISTY. Thirty years this spring.

TOURNOUR. Twenty-nine years.

CHRISTY. He's here thirty years according to the books.

TOURNOUR. Twenty-nine years.

CHRISTY. Thirty years.

TOURNOUR. Twenty-nine years. I was born in the workhouse, and I mind when the Master came in to it. Whist now, here he is, and time for him.

[He falls into an officious manner. He closes up the stove and puts bucket away. Then he goes over to desk, and, with his foot on the rung of the office stool, he turns the gas on full. CHRISTY CLARK gets out of arm-chair, and begins to arrange the periodicals that are on wooden chair. The corridor door opens. The man who appears is not the Master, however. He is the blind piper, MYLES GORMAN, who is dressed in the pauper garb. MYLES GORMAN is a Gael of the West of Ireland, with a face full of intellectual vigour. He is about sixty, and carries himself with energy. His face is pale and he has a fringe of a white beard. The eye-balls in his head are contracted, but it is evident he has some vestiges of sight. Before the others are aware who he is, he has advanced into the room. He stands there now turning the attentive face of the blind]

GORMAN. Mister Muskerry! Are you there, Mister Muskerry?

TOURNOUR. What do you want, my oul' fellow?

GORMAN [with a puzzled look]. Well, now, I've a favour to ask of your honour.

TOURNOUR. Be off out of this to your ward.

GORMAN. Is that Mister Muskerry?

CHRISTY. Mister Muskerry isn't here.

GORMAN. And who am I talking to?

CHRISTY. You are talking to Felix Tournour.

GORMAN. Felix Tournour! Ay, ay. Good night, Felix Tournour. When will the Master be back?

TOURNOUR [coming to him]. Not till you're out of this, and back in your ward.

GORMAN. Wasn't there a boy speaking to me?

CHRISTY. Yes [speaking as if to a deaf man]. The Master will be going the rounds in a while, and you can speak to him in the ward.

GORMAN. I've a favour to ask Master, and I don't want to ask before the others. [To CHRISTY] the Master be here soon, a vick v
TOURNOUR [taking him by shoulders]. Here, now, come on is your way out.

[He turns GORMAN to the door. As he is putting him out TOURNOUR enters]

TOURNOUR. This oul' fellow into the office, and I was leading back into his ward.

MUSKERRY. Leave the man alone.

[TOURNOUR retreats to the door and takes up the bucket; a look behind he goes out and closes the corridor door. CHRISTY CLARKE takes the periodicals over to table and sits down. MYLES GORMAN has been listening and attentive. THOMAS MUSKERRY stands with his back to the stove. He is over sixty, is a large man, fleshy in build and figure, sanguine and benevolent in disposition. He has the looks and movements of authority. His hair is white and long; his silver beard is trimmed. His clothes are becomingly fitting. He wears no overcoat but has a white knitted necker round his neck. He has a black, broad-brimmed hat which carries a walking-stick]

MUSKERRY. Well, my good man.

GORMAN. I'm here to ask a favour from you, Master.

MUSKERRY. You should proffer your request when I'm in the ward. However, I'm ready to give you my attention.

GORMAN. I'm a blinded man, Master, and when you're in the ward I can't get you by yourself conveniently. I can't come up to you like the oul' men and speak to you privately.

MUSKERRY. Well, now, what do I do for you?

GORMAN [eagerly]. They tell me to-morrow's the market-day, and I thought that you might give me a lift and let me go out about the town.

MUSKERRY. We'll consider it, my man.

GORMAN. Master, let me out to town on the market-day.

¹ A mhic bhiag, my little son.

MUSKERRY. We couldn't let you to play your pipes through the n.

GORMAN. I'm not thinking of the sic at all, Master, but to be out in day and to feel the throng moving out, and to be talking to the men that be on the roads.

MUSKERRY. We'll consider it, Gorman.

[He takes off muffler, and puts it on back of armchair]

GORMAN. Well, I'm very much gaged to your honour. Good night you, Master.

[He passes MUSKERRY and goes towards the door. MUSKERRY has been regarding him]

MUSKERRY. Tell me this, Gorman, e you always on the roads?

GORMAN. I was driving cattle, and as dealing in horses. Then I took with an oul' man, and he taught me pipes. I'm playing the pipes ever e, and that's thirty years ago. Well, eyes began to wither up on me, and y I've only a stim of sight. I'm a ded man from this out, Master.

MUSKERRY. And what will you do?

GORMAN. Oh, sure the roads of and are before me when I leave this; be playing my bit of music.

[He moves to the door]

MUSKERRY. Tell me; have you any ily yourself?

GORMAN. Ne'er a chick nor child onging to me. Ne'er a woman lay me. I went the road by myself. l you think of what I asked you, ster?

MUSKERRY. I'll consider it.

GORMAN. Good night to your our. Remember my name, Master Gorman, Myles Gorman.

[MUSKERRY stands looking after GORMAN]

MUSKERRY. Now, Christy Clarke, onsider that the man gone out is a y exceptional man.

CHRISTY. Is it Myles Gorman?

MUSKERRY. Yes. I'd even say that, sidering his station in life, Myles rman is a very superior man.

CHRISTY. They say he's not a good sician.

MUSKERRY. And maybe he's not. onsider, however, that there's great elligence in his face. He stands re you, and you feel that he has life of a young colt, and then you're nd to think that, in spite of the fact

that he's blind and a wanderer, the man has not wasted his life.

[MUSKERRY settles himself in the armchair]

CHRISTY. Will you give leave for to-morrow?

MUSKERRY. No, Christy, I will not.

CHRISTY. Why not, Mister Muskerry?

MUSKERRY. That man would break bounds and stay away.

CHRISTY. Do you think he would?

MUSKERRY. He'd fly off, like the woodquest flying away from the tame pigeons.

CHRISTY. He and his brother had a farm between them. His brother was married, and one day the brother told Myles to go to Dublin to see a comrade of his who was sick. Myles was home in a week, and when he came back he found that his brother had sold the place and was gone out of the country.

MUSKERRY. His brother did wrong, but he didn't do so much wrong to Myles Gorman.

CHRISTY. How is that, Mister Muskerry?

MUSKERRY. He sent Myles Gorman to his own life. He's a man who went his own way always; a man who never had any family nor any affairs; a man far different from me, Christy Clarke. I was always in the middle of affairs. Then, too, I busied myself about other people. It was for the best, I think; but that's finished. On the desk under your hand is a letter, and I want you to bring it to me.

CHRISTY *[going through papers idly]*. "I am much obliged for your favour —"

MUSKERRY. That's not it.

CHRISTY *[reading another letter]*. "I am about to add to the obligations under which I stand to you, by recommending to your notice my grandson, Albert Crilly —"

MUSKERRY. That's the letter. It's the last of its kind. Bring it to me. *[CHRISTY CLARKE brings over the letter]* There comes a turn in the blood and a turn in the mind, Christy. This while back I've been going out to the country instead of into the town, and coming back here in the evenings I've seen the workhouse with the big wall around it, and the big gate going into it, and I've said to myself that Thomas Muskerry ought to be as secure and contented here as if he was in his own castle.

CHRISTY. And so you ought, Mister Muskerry.

MUSKERRY. Look round at the office, Christy. I've made it as fit for me as the nest for the wren. I'll spend a few more years here, and then I'll go out on pension. I won't live in the town. I've seen a place in the country I'd like, and the people will be leaving it in a year or two.

CHRISTY. Where is it, Mister Muskerry?

MUSKERRY. I'll say no more about it now, but it's not far from this, and its near the place where I was reared.

CHRISTY. And so you'll go back to your own place?

MUSKERRY. As Oliver Goldsmith my fellow county man, and I might almost say, my fellow parishioner, says — What's this the lines are about the hare, Christy?

CHRISTY.
"And like the Hare whom Hounds and Horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew."

MUSKERRY. Aye.
"And like the Hare whom Hounds and Horns pursue" —

[The clock strikes nine]

CHRISTY. You weren't on the rounds yet?

MUSKERRY *[startled]*. Would you believe it, now, it was nearly passing my mind to go on the rounds? *[He rises, putting the letter in his pocket]* Where's that fellow, Albert Crilly? He was to have been in here to give me a hand with the abstracts. Christy Clarke, go down to Miss Coghlan's and get me two novelettes. Bring me up two nice love stories, and be here when I come back.

[CHRISTY CLARKE takes his cap off rack and goes out. THOMAS MUSKERRY puts on his scarf, goes to the rack and takes down the bunch of keys. As he is going out FELIX TOURNOUR enters with a bucket of coal. He carries it over to the stove]

MUSKERRY. Now, Tournour, sweep up this place.

[THOMAS MUSKERRY goes out by corridor door. FELIX TOURNOUR takes brush from under desk, left, and begins to sweep in the direction of corridor door]

TOURNOUR. Sweeping, sweeping! I'll run out of the house some day on account of the work I've to do for

Master Thomas Muskerry. *[He on his brush in front of stove]* I why you're going for walks in country, my oul' cod. There's in town that you've got enough. You don't want to go bail for M Daughter, nor for Count Cr Crilly, your son-in-law, nor for Masters and Mistresses; all right oul' cod-fish. That I may see laying you out on the flags of Hell *[He puts the brush standing right, and speaks to it]*

"The Devil went out for a ramble at night Through Garrison Union to see every The oul' men were dreaming of meat to near them.

And the Devil cocked ears at the word to hear them.

'Twice a year we get meat,' said the too oul' men.

'Oh, Lord send the meat won't be too again.'

To clear away dishes Mick Fogarty goes May the Devil burn the nails off his toes Deep dreaming that night of fast days l Sagging the walls with the pull of his s In his chamber above Thomas Musker

snug,
When the Devil this summons roared lug — "

[The door of the Master's apartments is opened and ALBERT CRILLY enters. ALBERT CRILLY is a young man, who might be a bank clerk or a medical student. He is something of a dupe, but has a certain insight and

ALBERT *[lighting a cigarette]*. I grandparent here, Tournour?

TOURNOUR. He's gone on the rounds, Mister Albert.

ALBERT. What time was he up in the morning?

TOURNOUR. He was late enough. He wasn't up in time to come to work with us.

ALBERT. The old man will get into trouble.

TOURNOUR. If the nuns hear of it.

ALBERT. He'll have to give up the whole thing up soon.

TOURNOUR. He's well off that gets somebody else to do the work for him.

[He continues to sweep the corridor]

ALBERT. Tournour, you're a damned clever fellow. I heard a piece of news yesterday that I thought was damned good.

TOURNOUR. Was it a rhyme?

ALBERT. It was something called 'The Devil's Rambles.'

TOURNOUR *[taking a step towards n]*. Don't let the boss hear, and I'll tell it to you, Mr. Albert.

[He holds the brush in his hands and is about to begin the recitation when CROFTON CRILLY enters from the Master's apartments. CROFTON CRILLY has a presentable appearance. He is big and well made, has a fair beard and blue eyes. A pipe is always in his mouth. He is a loiterer, a talker, a listener]

CRILLY. Are you going to finish the extracts to-night, Albert?

ALBERT. I believe I am. Go on with 'The Devil's Rambles', Tournour.

CRILLY. I heard it in Keegan's. It's damn good.

TOURNOUR. I don't like saying it before Mister Crilly.

CRILLY *[with easy contempt]*. Go on with it, man; I'll leave a pint in Keegan's for you.

TOURNOUR. Well, you mightn't like

CRILLY. Have done talking and go with it.

TOURNOUR *[reciting]* —

In his chamber above—a—a person lay snug,
When the Devil this summons roared in his lug—
'Get up,' said the Devil, 'and swear you'll be true,
And the oath of allegiance I'll tender anew.
You'll have pork, veal, and lamb, mutton-chops, fowl and fish,
And cabbage and carrots and leeks as you wish.
For fast days to you will make visitation,
For your sake the town will have dispensation.
For fast days you will have, without envy or strife,
And when you depart you'll find the same life,
And in the next world you'll have your will
And your sway,
With a Poorhouse to govern all your own way,
And I'll promise you this; to keep up your state,
I'll have Felix Tournour to watch at the gate.'"

CRILLY. That's damn good. I must have a copy of the whole of it to show at Keegan's.

[TOURNOUR has swept as far as the corridor door. He opens it and sweeps down the passage. He goes out and closes door]

CRILLY. That's a damn clever fellow. *[He becomes anxious, as with a troubled recollection. He goes to the little cabinet, opens it, and takes out a bottle of whisky and a glass. He pours some whisky into the glass, and remains looking at himself in the mirror. He smooths his beard. He goes to the armchair with the glass of whisky, the anxious expression still on his face]* This is a cursed town.

[He drinks]

ALBERT. Every town in Ireland is a cursed town.

CRILLY. But this is an extraordinarily cursed town. Everybody's in debt to everybody else. I don't know what's to be done. Now, imagine that fellow, James Covey, failing in business and getting clear out of the town.

ALBERT. Covey seems to have done it well.

CRILLY. God knows how many he has stuck.

ALBERT. Well, he didn't stick the Crillys for anything.

CRILLY. Albert, you don't know how these financial things work out. Do you think would his brother settle?

ALBERT. Settle with whom?

CRILLY. Well . . . with any of the . . . any of the people that have . . . I don't know. It's a cursed town. If I had joined the police at your age, I'd have a pension by this, and I mightn't care for any of them.

ALBERT. I wish I had a job and I'd wait on the pension.

CRILLY. Oh, you'll be all right. The grandfather is seeing about your job.

ALBERT. If the grandparent gets me that job I'll want two new suits at least.

CRILLY. 'Pon my soul, Albert, I don't know what's to be done. *[His mind wanders off]* I suppose the abstracts have to go out in the morning.

ALBERT. They have. And damn all the old man has done to them.

CRILLY. The Guardians hear that he's late in the mornings, Albert, and some of them are beginning to question his fitness to check the stores.

ALBERT. The old man ought to resign.

CRILLY. I suppose he ought. I'm not wishing for his resignation myself, Albert. You know your mother regards it as a settled thing that he should come and live with us.

ALBERT. The mother and Anna are preparing for the event.

CRILLY. How's that, Albert?

ALBERT. Mother has James Scollard in her eye for the new Master.

CRILLY. Right enough! Scollard would get it, too, and then he would marry Anna.

ALBERT. That's the arrangement, I expect.

CRILLY. It mightn't be bad. Scollard mightn't want Nancy's money under that arrangement. Still I don't like the idea of the old man living in the house.

ALBERT. The mother would never think of letting him take himself and his pension anywhere else.

CRILLY. I don't think she would.

ALBERT. I wouldn't be surprised if he did go somewhere else. I hear he often goes up to that cottage in Stradrina.

CRILLY. What cottage, Albert?

ALBERT. Briar Cottage. I hear he sits down there, and talks of coming to live in the place.

CRILLY [*warningly*]. Albert, don't clap hands behind the bird. Take my word, and say nothing about it.

ALBERT. All right.

CRILLY. We'd have no comfort in the house if your mother's mind was distracted.

[*Mrs. CRILLY enters from corridor. She is a woman of forty, dressed in a tailor-made costume. She has searching eyes. There is something of hysteria about her mouth. She has been good-looking*]

CRILLY. Good night, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. Are you finishing the abstracts, Albert?

ALBERT. I'm working at them. It's a good job we didn't leave the old man much latitude for making mistakes.

MRS. CRILLY [*closing door*]. He'll have to resign.

CRILLY. Good God, Marianne.

[*He rises*]

MRS. CRILLY. Well. Let him be sent away without a pension. Of course, he can live with us the rest of his life and give us nothing for keeping him.

CRILLY. I don't know what's in your mind at all, Marianne.

[*He crosses over to the cabinet, opens it, and fills out another glass of whisky*]

ALBERT. Let the old man do what suits himself.

CRILLY [*coming back to stove*]. Marianne. Let him do what suits himself. For the present.

MRS. CRILLY. For pity's sake down that glass and listen to what I have to say.

CRILLY. What's the matter, Marianne?

MRS. CRILLY. James Scollard to me to-day, and he told me about things that are noticed. . . . They notice them, the Guardians notice them. He misses Mass. He is late on rounds. He can't check the stores as he is coming into the house. He may get himself into such trouble that he'll be dismissed with only an apology for his pension, or with no pension at all.

CRILLY. I don't know what's to be done.

MRS. CRILLY. If he could be got to resign now, James Scollard would have a good chance of becoming Workhouse Master. He would marry Anna, and we would still have some hand in the affairs of the House.

CRILLY. Yes, yes. I think Scollard could make a place for himself.

ALBERT. The old man won't be anxious to retire.

MRS. CRILLY. Why shouldn't he retire when his time is up?

ALBERT. Well, here he is what I called a potentate. He won't care to come down and live over Crilly's shop.

MRS. CRILLY. And where else would he live, in the name of God?

ALBERT. He won't want to live with our crowd.

MRS. CRILLY. What crowd? If the boys can be sent to school, you'll be able to get your situation, and Anna will be able to get on. [*She seats herself in the armchair*] I don't know what Albert means when he says that the Master would not be content to live with us. It was always settled that he would come to us when his service was over.

[*ALBERT, who has been going to the books, has met something that surprises him. He drops CRILLY to the desk. The boys go over the papers, puzzled and excited. ANNA CRILLY enters from corridor. She is a handsome some girl of about nineteen or twenty, with a rich complexion, dark hair and eyes. She is dressed, and wears a cap of fur. She stands at the stove behind her mother, holding*]

hands over the stove. MRS. CRILLY watches the pair at the desk]

MRS. CRILLY. We can't think of owing a pension of fifty pounds a year to go out of our house. Where will we get money to send the boys to school?

ANNA. Mother. Grandfather is going to live away from us.

MRS. CRILLY. Why do you repeat at Albert says?

ANNA. I didn't hear Albert say anything.

MRS. CRILLY. Then, what are you talking about?

ANNA. Grandfather goes to Marry's cottage nearly every evening, and stays there for hours. They'll be leaving the place in a year or two, and grandfather was saying that he would leave the cottage when he retired from the Workhouse.

MRS. CRILLY. When did you hear this?

ANNA. This evening. Delia Martin told me.

MRS. CRILLY. And that's the reason why he has kept away from us. He goes about with strangers, and leaves us in black disgrace of his thought.

[CRILLY and ALBERT are busy at desk]

CRILLY. Well, damn it all —

ALBERT. Here's the voucher.

CRILLY. God! I don't know what's to be done.

ALBERT. It's a matter of fifty tons.

[ALBERT turns round deliberately, leaving his father going through the papers in desperate eagerness. ALBERT takes a cigarette from behind his ear, takes a match-box from his waistcoat pocket, and strikes a light. He goes towards door of apartments. MRS. CRILLY rises]

ALBERT [his hand on the handle of door]. Well so-long.

MRS. CRILLY. Where are you going?

ALBERT. I'm leaving you to talk it over with the old man.

[MRS. CRILLY looks from ALBERT to CRILLY]

CRILLY. The Master has let himself in for something serious, Marianne.

ALBERT. It's a matter of fifty pounds. The old man has let the Guardians pay for a hundred tons of coal when only fifty were delivered.

MRS. CRILLY. Is that so, Crofton?

CRILLY. It looks like it, Marianne.

ALBERT. There were fifty tons of coal already in stores, but the Governor didn't take them into account. That cute boy, James Covey, delivered fifty tons and charged for the hundred. The old man passed on the certificate, and the Guardians paid Covey. They helped him to his passage to America.

[He opens door and goes through]

MRS. CRILLY. They will dismiss him — dismiss him without a pension.

ANNA. Mother. If he gets the pension first, could they take it back from him?

CRILLY. No. But they could make him pay back the fifty pounds in instalments.

MRS. CRILLY. Fifty pounds! We can't afford to lose fifty pounds.

ANNA. Who would find out about the coal, father?

CRILLY. The Guardians who take stock.

ANNA. And how would they know at this time whether there was a hundred or a hundred and fifty tons there at first?

CRILLY. The business men amongst them would know. However, there won't be an inspection for some time.

ANNA. Suppose grandfather had got his pension and had left the Workhouse, who would know about the coal?

CRILLY. The new Workhouse Master.

MRS. CRILLY. The new Workhouse Master —

CRILLY. Marianne —

MRS. CRILLY. Well?

CRILLY. I think I'll stay here and advise the old man.

MRS. CRILLY. No. Go away.

CRILLY [at door of apartments]. After all, I'm one of the Guardians, and something might be done.

MRS. CRILLY. You can do nothing. We can do nothing for him. Let him go to the strangers.

[CRILLY goes out]

MRS. CRILLY. Anna!

ANNA. Yes, mother.

MRS. CRILLY. The Martins are not giving up their house for a year or two?

ANNA. No, mother.

MRS. CRILLY. If he resigns now his pension will be safe. There is nothing else against him.

ANNA. But some one will find out the difference in the coal.

MRS. CRILLY. It's the new Work-house Master who will know that.

ANNA [hardening]. But he could not pass such a thing, mother.

MRS. CRILLY [abandoning a position]. Well, after your grandfather gets his pension we could make some arrangement with the Guardians.

ANNA. Yes, mother. Hasn't grandfather a hundred pounds invested in the shop?

MRS. CRILLY. It's not a hundred pounds. Besides, it's not an investment.

ANNA [with a certain resolution in her rich voice]. Mother. Is my money safe?

MRS. CRILLY. We could give you the eighty pounds, Anna, but after that we would need all the help we could get from you.

ANNA. Yes, mother.

MRS. CRILLY [again taking up a position]. But if we help James Scollard to the place.

ANNA [with determination]. Whether Mr. Scollard gets the place or does not get the place, I'll want my fortune, mother.

MRS. CRILLY. Very well, Anna. If we could get him to come over. . . . [She sits in armchair] There's a lamb in Ginnell's field; you might call in to-morrow and ask them to prepare it for us.

ANNA. Then grandfather is coming to dinner on Sunday?

MRS. CRILLY. We must get him to come.

[Some one is coming up the passage. ANNA's hand is on handle of door. She holds it open.]

THOMAS MUSKERRY stands there]

MUSKERRY [pleased to see her]. Well, Nancy!

ANNA. Good night, grandpapa.

[He regards her with fondness]

MRS. CRILLY. Good night, father.

MUSKERRY. This Nancy girl is looking remarkably well. [He turns to Mrs. CRILLY] Well, ma'am, and how are you? I've written that letter for that rascally Albert.

[He leaves his stick on table and goes to desk. MRS. CRILLY watches him. ANNA comes to her. MUSKERRY addresses an envelope with some labour. MRS. CRILLY notices a tress of ANNA'S hair falling down.

ANNA kneels down beside She takes off ANNA'S cap, smooths up the hair, and puts the cap on again. Having addressed the envelope, MUSKERRY takes up a piece of wax to the seal. He seals the letter, then puts it out]

MUSKERRY. Here's the letter for you, and maybe it's the last thing I can do for any of ye.

MRS. CRILLY. You are very good. [MUSKERRY goes to door]

MUSKERRY. In season and out of season I've put myself at your service. I can do no more for ye.

[She takes the letter from him. Her resentment is breaking down. She sits on chair beside the door. He speaks in a reproaching tone]

MUSKERRY. You're looking well, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. I'm beginning to feel well again.

MUSKERRY. And the infant? What age is he now?

MRS. CRILLY. Little Joseph is now months old.

MUSKERRY. I dreamt of him last night. I thought Joseph became a bishop. He ought to be reared for the Church, Marianne. Well, well, nothing more to do with that. [Christy settles himself in the armchair]

ANNA. Christy Clarke hasn't been here at all, grandpapa.

MUSKERRY. Stand here till I see you, Nancy. [ANNA comes to the stove] I wouldn't be surprised if she were the best-looking girl in the town. Nancy.

ANNA [without any coquettishness]. Anna Crilly is not going into competition with the others. [She wraps a muffler round him, then kisses him.] Good night, grandpapa.

[She goes out by corridor]

MRS. CRILLY. Thank you for the letter for Albert.

MUSKERRY. I think, Marianne, the last thing I can do for you or ye.

MRS. CRILLY. Well, we can't tell you a bad story of you, and things are not so bad with us.

MUSKERRY. I'm glad to hear that. I was thinking of going to see you next week.

MRS. CRILLY. Come to dinner on Sunday. We are having a lamb.

MUSKERRY. What sort is the lamb?
 MRS. CRILLY. Oh, a very young
 one. Anna will make the dressing
 for you.

MUSKERRY. I'll send round a bottle
 of wine. Perhaps we'll be in the way of
 celebrating something for Albert.

MRS. CRILLY. Nancy was saying
 that you might like to stay a few days
 with us.

MUSKERRY. Stay a few days! How
 could I do that, ma'am?

MRS. CRILLY. You could get some-
 body to look after the House. James
 Colliard would do it, and you could stay
 with us for a few days.

MUSKERRY. Well, indeed, I'll do no
 such thing. What put it into your head
 to ask me this?

MRS. CRILLY. Nancy said —

MUSKERRY. Let the girl speak for
 herself. What's in your mind, woman?

MRS. CRILLY. Well, you're not look-
 ing well.

MUSKERRY. I'm as well as ever I
 was.

MRS. CRILLY. Others do not think

MUSKERRY. I suppose you heard
 was late a few mornings. No matter
 about that. I'm as well as ever I was.
 No more talk about it; I'm going on
 with the work.

[He rises and goes over to desk]

MRS. CRILLY. I'm sorry to say that
 no one else thinks as well of you as you
 think of yourself.

MUSKERRY. Well, I'll hear no more
 about it, and that's enough about it.
 Why isn't Albert Crilly here?

MRS. CRILLY. Well, he was here,
 and he is coming back.

MUSKERRY. I'll want him. [He
 picks up a card left on the desk. He
 turns round and reads] — "You have
 the Guardians pay for a hundred
 tons. James Covey delivered only
 fifty tons of coal." Who left this here?

MRS. CRILLY. I suppose Albert left
 for you.

MUSKERRY. The impudent rascal.
 How dare he address himself like that
 to me? [He throws card on table]

MRS. CRILLY. Perhaps he found
 something out in the books.

MUSKERRY. No matter whether he
 did or not, he'll have to have respect
 when he addresses me. Anyway it's
 a lie — a damn infernal lie. I was in
 the stores the other day, and there was
 eighty tons of coal still there. Cer-

tainly twenty tons had been taken out
 of it. The Provision Check Account
 will show. [He takes up a book and
 turns round. He goes back some pages.
 He lets the book fall. He stands there
 helpless] I suppose you all are right
 in your judgment of me. I'm at my
 failing time. I'll have to leave this
 without pension or prospect. They'll
 send me away.

MRS. CRILLY. They had nothing
 against you before this.

MUSKERRY. I was spoken of as the
 pattern for the officials of Ireland.

MRS. CRILLY. If you resigned now —

MUSKERRY. Before this comes out.
 [He looks for help] Marianne, it would
 be like the blow to the struck ox if I
 lost my pension.

MRS. CRILLY. If you managed to
 get the pension you could pay the
 Guardians back in a lump sum.

MUSKERRY. If I resigned now, where
 would I go to?

MRS. CRILLY. It was always under-
 stood that you would stay with us.

MUSKERRY. No, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. You'll have the place
 to yourself. The boys will be going
 to school, and Albert will be away,
 too. Anna and myself will look after
 you.

MUSKERRY. I could stay for a
 while.

MRS. CRILLY. Oh, well, if you have
 a better place to go —

MUSKERRY. Remember what I said,
 Marianne. I've worked for you and
 yours, in season and out of season.
 There should be no more claims on
 me.

MRS. CRILLY. There are no more
 claims on you.

MUSKERRY. I'm willing to leave in
 the shop what I put into the shop. Let
 Anna know that it will come to her from
 me. I'll write to the Guardians to-night
 and I'll send in my resignation. I
 venture to think that they'll know their
 loss.

[MRS. CRILLY goes out quietly by
 corridor door]

MUSKERRY [by himself]. And I had
 made this place as fit for me as the
 nest for the wren. Wasn't he glad to
 write that card, the impudent rascal,
 with his tongue in his cheek? I'll con-
 sider it again. I won't leave this place
 till it fits myself to leave it.

[CHRISTY CLARKE enters by cor-
 ridor door with papers]

MUSKERRY. They want me to resign from this place, Christy.

CHRISTY. You're thirty years here! Aren't you, Mister Muskerry?

MUSKERRY. Thirty years, thirty years. Ay, Christy, thirty years; it's a long time. And I'm at my failing time. Perhaps I'm not able to do any more. Day after day there would be troubles here, and I wouldn't be able to face them. And in the end I might lose my position. I'm going to write out my resignation.

[*He goes to the desk and writes.*

CHRISTY is at table. MUSKERRY turns round after writing]

MUSKERRY. No one that comes here can have the same heart for the poor that I had. I was earning in the year of the famine. I saw able men struggling to get the work that would bring them a handful of Indian meal. And I saw the little children waiting on the roads for relief. [*He turns back and goes on with letter. Suddenly a bell in the House begins to toll*] What's that for, Christy?

CHRISTY. Malachi O'Rourk, the Prince, as they called him, is dead.

MUSKERRY. Aye, I gave orders to toll him when he died. He was an esteemed gentleman, and songs were made about his family. People used to annoy him, but he's gone from them now. Bring me a little whisky, Christy.

[CHRISTY goes to Cabinet. MUSKERRY follows him]

CHRISTY. There's none in the bottle, Mister Muskerry.

MUSKERRY [*bitterly*]. No, I suppose not. And is that rascal, Albert Crilly, coming back?

CHRISTY. He's coming, Mister Muskerry. I left the novelette on the table. Miss Coghlan says it's a nice love story. "The Heart of Angelina", it is called.

MUSKERRY. I haven't the heart to read.

[*The bell continues to toll.*

CHRISTY goes to door]

CHRISTY. Good night, Mister Muskerry.

MUSKERRY. Good night, Christy.

[CHRISTY CLARKE goes out through apartments. THOMAS MUSKERRY is standing with hand on armchair. The bell tolls]

[*Curtain*]

ACT II

[*In CRILLY'S, a month later. The room is the parlour off the shop. A door, right, leads into the shop, the fireplace is above this door. The back, right, is a cupboard. Back is a window looking on the street. A door, left, leads to the rooms. There is a table near the door and a horse-hair sofa back of an armchair at fire, and two leather covered chairs about. Conventional pictures on walls, and two certificates framed, showing that some one in the house has passed some Intermediate examinations*

It is the forenoon of an April day. MRS. CRILLY is seated on sofa, gazing through a heap of account books. ANNA CRILLY is at window. CROFTON CRILLY enters from the shop]

CRILLY. It's all right, Marianne. MRS. CRILLY. Well?

CRILLY. The Guardians insisted on appointing an outside person to take stock of the Workhouse stores. It's new regulation, you know. Well, a job lay between young Dobbs, Albert, and Albert has got it. I don't say but it was a near thing.

MRS. CRILLY. I hope Albert know what to do.

CRILLY. He'll want to watch the points. Where's the Master?

MRS. CRILLY. He's in his room upstairs.

CRILLY. Was he not out this morning?

MRS. CRILLY. He's not dressed.

CRILLY. He was more particular when he was in the Workhouse.

ANNA. I know who those two children are now. They are the new manager's children.

CRILLY. He's a Scotchman.

ANNA. And married for the second time. Mother, Mrs. Dunne is going to the races. Such a sketch of a hat.

MRS. CRILLY. It would be better for her if she stayed at home and looked after her business.

ANNA. She won't have much business to look after soon. That's the trouble, her husband has come out of Farrell's public-house.

CRILLY. He's drinking with the Dispensary Doctor. Companions. They're the curse of this town, Marianne. [*He sits down*]

ANNA. She's walked into a blind man, hat and all. He's from the Workhouse.

CRILLY. He's the blind piper out of the Workhouse, Myles Gorman.

MRS. CRILLY. There's no one within. You should go into the shop, Anna.

ANNA. Yes, mother. *[She crosses]* James Scollard is coming in, mother.

MRS. CRILLY. Very well, Anna. Stay in the shop until Mary comes.

[ANNA goes into the shop. CRILLY moves about]

MRS. CRILLY. You're very uneasy.

CRILLY. Yes, I am uneasy, Marianne. There's some presentment on me. Fifty pounds a year is a good pension for the old man. He's a month at now. He ought to be getting an instalment.

[ANNA comes in from shop]

ANNA. Mother, the doctor's daughter in the shop.

MRS. CRILLY. What does she want?

ANNA *[imitating an accent]*. Send up a pound of butter, two pounds of sugar, and a pound of tea.

MRS. CRILLY. These people are paying nobody. But we can't refuse her. I suppose we'll have to send them up. Very distant with her, Anna.

ANNA. I've kept her waiting. Here's letter, mother.

MRS. CRILLY *[taking letter]*. When did it come, Anna?

ANNA. It's just handed in.

[ANNA goes out. MRS. CRILLY opens letter]

MRS. CRILLY. It's from the bank. They want me to call. What does the bank manager want with me, I wonder?

CRILLY. I have something to tell you, Marianne. I'll tell you in a while.

[He takes a turn up and down]

MRS. CRILLY. What do you want to tell me?

CRILLY. Prepare your mind, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. What is it?

CRILLY. I owe you money, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. Money! How do you owe me money?

CRILLY. That cute boy, James Covey, who took in all the town —

MRS. CRILLY *[rising]*. Covey! My God! You backed a bill for him?

CRILLY. I'll make a clean breast of it, I did.

MRS. CRILLY *[with fear in her eyes]*. How much is it?

CRILLY *[walking away to window]*. I'll come to that, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. Did any one back the bill with you?

CRILLY. I obliged the fellow. No one backed the bill with me.

MRS. CRILLY. Does any one know of it?

CRILLY. No, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. The bank. . . . Tell me what happened.

CRILLY. The bank manager sent for me when he came to the town after Covey cleared.

MRS. CRILLY. We had four hundred pounds in the bank.

CRILLY. We had, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. Tell me how much was the bill.

CRILLY. There's no use in beating about the bush. The bill was for three hundred pounds.

MRS. CRILLY. And what has the bank done?

CRILLY. I'm sorry to say, Marianne, the bank has taken the money over from our account.

MRS. CRILLY. You've ruined us at last, Crofton Crilly.

CRILLY. You should never forgive me, Marianne. I'll go to America and begin life again.

[He turns to go out by shop]

MRS. CRILLY. We have no money left.

CRILLY. A hundred pounds, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. That's Anna's money.

CRILLY. Scollard should be satisfied.

MRS. CRILLY. Anna insists on getting her money.

CRILLY. Very well, Marianne. I'll leave it all to yourself.

[JAMES SCOLLARD comes in. ANNA is behind him. SCOLLARD has an account book in his hand]

SCOLLARD. Good morning, Mrs. Crilly. Good morning, Mr. Crilly.

MRS. CRILLY. Good morning, Mr. Scollard. *[CROFTON CRILLY turns to go]*

ANNA. Don't go, father.

SCOLLARD. Don't go, Mr. Crilly. I have something particular to say to yourself and Mrs. Crilly.

MRS. CRILLY. Sit down, Mr. Scollard.

[ANNA brings chair, and SCOLLARD sits center. ANNA stands behind him. MRS. CRILLY sits left of him]

SCOLLARD. I am here to propose for the hand of your daughter, Miss Anna Crilly.

MRS. CRILLY. We have nothing to say against your proposal, Mr. Scollard.

CRILLY. Won't you take something, James?

SCOLLARD. No, thanks, Mr. Crilly. I never touch intoxicants.

[CROFTON CRILLY goes into shop]

MRS. CRILLY. We couldn't wish for a better match for Anna. But I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Scollard, that we have had a very severe loss in our business.

ANNA. What is it, mother?

MRS. CRILLY. I don't mind telling you. Mr. Crilly has made himself responsible for a bill on the bank.

SCOLLARD. In whose interest, Mrs. Crilly?

MRS. CRILLY. He backed a bill for James Covey. A bill for three hundred pounds.

ANNA. Oh, mother!

MRS. CRILLY. It's a dead sure loss. I don't know what we are to do, Anna.

SCOLLARD. This is very bad, Mrs. Crilly.

CROFTON CRILLY comes back from shop.
He brings in a glass of whisky. He puts whisky on chimney-piece]

MRS. CRILLY. The bank has taken over three hundred pounds from our account.

CRILLY. Perhaps Scollard —

SCOLLARD. What were you saying, Mr. Crilly?

CRILLY. Oh, I was just thinking about a bill you know — If some one would go security for us at the bank —

ANNA. Father, what are you saying?

MRS. CRILLY. It's unnecessary to talk like that. In spite of your foolishness, we still have a balance at the bank.

ANNA. My portion comes to me from my grandmother.

SCOLLARD. May I ask, Mrs. Crilly, is Miss Crilly's portion safe?

MRS. CRILLY. It is safe, Mr. Scollard.

SCOLLARD. I have been definitely appointed Master of the Union, and I may say that Anna and myself are anxious to marry.

MRS. CRILLY. It needn't be soon, Mr. Scollard.

SCOLLARD. After Easter, Mrs. Crilly.

MRS. CRILLY. But that's very so.

SCOLLARD. I am anxious to set down, Mrs. Crilly. I'm on my way to a meeting of the Board of Guardians, but before I go I'd like to have some more information about your loss.

MRS. CRILLY. Anna's portion is untouched, but we could hardly afford to let the money go from us now.

SCOLLARD. Is that so, Mrs. Crilly?

MRS. CRILLY. Three hundred pounds is a very severe loss.

SCOLLARD. Very severe, indeed. Still, you understand, Mrs. Crilly, difficulties of taking such a step as marriage without adequate provision.

CRILLY. Damn it all, man, Mr. Scollard, I and myself married without anything at all.

MRS. CRILLY [bitterly]. Anna would be such a fool as her mother.

CRILLY. Well, Scollard has his position, and we helped him to it.

SCOLLARD. I acknowledge that.

ANNA. Isn't my portion eight hundred pounds, mother?

MRS. CRILLY. Yes, Anna. But I don't like to tell Mr. Scollard that it would come as a strain on us to let the money go at once.

SCOLLARD. I daresay, Mrs. Crilly.

ANNA. But, mother, wouldn't our money be safer with us?

MRS. CRILLY. Well, I leave the whole thing in the hands of Mr. Scollard.

SCOLLARD. Anna and myself have been talking things over, Mrs. Crilly.

ANNA. And we don't want to be in life in a poor way.

SCOLLARD. We see the advantage of being always solvent, Mrs. Crilly.

ANNA. James has ambitions, and there's no reason why he should not venture for the post of Secretary of the County Council when old Mr. Dolan retires.

SCOLLARD. In a few years, Mr. Crilly, when I had more official experience and some reputation.

ANNA. Then he would have seven or eight hundred a year.

SCOLLARD. As I said, a man like myself would want to be in a perfectly solvent position.

ANNA. Besides, James has no money of his own.

SCOLLARD. I never had the chance of putting money by — Family capital, Mrs. Crilly.

ANNA. And we don't want to be in life in a poor way.

MRS. CRILLY. You won't want the whole of the money. I'll give you forty pounds now.

CRILLY. And forty when the first child is born.

ANNA. Oh, father, how can you say such a thing?

SCOLLARD. I need only say this. Anna and myself were talking over affairs, and we came to the conclusion it would be best not to start with less than eighty pounds. *[He rises]* I have gone down to the Board Room now, for there is a meeting of the Guardians.

[He goes towards door]

CRILLY. Won't you take a glass?

SCOLLARD. No, thanks, Mr. Crilly. I never touch stimulants. Good day to you all.

[He goes out. CROFTON CRILLY goes after him]

MRS. CRILLY. Anna, you won't be deprived of your money.

ANNA. Then what's the difficulty, mother?

MRS. CRILLY. Let half of the money remain with us for a while.

ANNA. But, mother, if I don't get my money, what security have I that what's left will be good in six months or a year?

MRS. CRILLY. I'll watch the money for you, Anna.

ANNA. It's hard to keep a hold on money in a town where business is going down.

MRS. CRILLY. Forty pounds will be given to you and forty pounds will be left safe for you.

ANNA. Forty pounds! There's not a small farmer comes into the shop but his daughter has more of a dowry than forty pounds.

MRS. CRILLY. Think of all who marry without a dowry at all.

ANNA. You wouldn't have me go to meet Scollard without a dowry?

MRS. CRILLY. Well, you know the way we're situated. If you insist on getting eighty pounds we'll have to make an overdraft on the bank, and, the way business is, I don't know how we'll ever recover it.

ANNA. There won't be much left of eighty pounds when we get what costs us in furniture.

MRS. CRILLY. I could let you have some furniture.

ANNA. No, mother. We want to start in a way that is different from this case.

MRS. CRILLY. You'll want all the money together?

ANNA. All of it, mother.

MRS. CRILLY. You'll have to get it so. But you're very hard, Anna.

ANNA. This house would teach any one to look to themselves.

MRS. CRILLY. Come upstairs. *[ANNA goes, left]* Three hundred pounds of a loss. Eighty pounds with that. I'm terrified when I think.

[She goes after ANNA]

[CROFTON CRILLY comes in from shop. He takes glass of whisky from table, and sits down in armchair]

CRILLY. I don't know what Mari-anna's to do at all. She has a shocking lot to contend with. Can anything be got from the old man, I wonder?

[ALBERT CRILLY comes in by door, left]

ALBERT. Well, pa.

CRILLY. Well, Albert. What's the news in the town, Albert?

ALBERT. They say that you've backed a bill for Covey.

CRILLY. If your mother hears that kind of talk she'll be vexed, Albert.

ALBERT. But did you back the bill?

CRILLY. For Heaven's sake, let me alone, Albert. Yes, I backed the bill.

ALBERT. How much?

CRILLY. You'll hear all about it from your mother.

ALBERT. They say the bill was for three hundred.

CRILLY. It was three or thereabouts.

ALBERT. 'Pon my word, father, the mother will have to take out a mandamus against you.

CRILLY *[with parental dignity]*. Don't talk to me in that way, Sir.

ALBERT. It's scandalous, really. I expect you've ruined the business.

CRILLY. I hate the world and all its works and pomps.

ALBERT. I believe you've done for the business. I'm going away.

CRILLY. Then you've got the other appointment?

ALBERT. Temporary clerkship in the Land Department. I wonder would the mother let me have the money for clothes?

CRILLY *[desperately]*. Don't mention it at all to her.

ALBERT. I have a card from a Dublin tailor in my pocket. If I could pay him for one suit, I could get another on tick.

CRILLY. I tell you not to talk to your mother about money. That fellow, Scollard, has put her out.

ALBERT. How's that?

CRILLY. Money again. Wants the whole of Anna's portion down. And Anna's backing him up, too. I don't know how your mother can stand it. I don't like Scollard. Then you won't be staying on, Albert, to do the stock-taking in the Workhouse?

ALBERT. No; they'll have to get some one else. I'm glad to be out of that job.

CRILLY. I'm not sorry, Albert.

ALBERT. The mother would expect me to do something queer in my report.

CRILLY. Between you and me, Albert, women aren't acquainted with the working of affairs, and they expect unusual things to happen. Who will they make stocktaker, now?

ALBERT. Young Dobbs, likely. I suppose the whole business about the coal will come out then?

CRILLY. I suppose it will; but say nothing about it now, Albert. Let the hare sit.

ALBERT. What does the old man think about it now?

CRILLY. He's very close to himself. I think he has forgotten all about it.

ALBERT. I wouldn't say so.

CRILLY. Who's that in the shop, Albert?

ALBERT. Felix Tournour.

CRILLY [rising]. I wonder what they think about Scollard in the Poorhouse.

[He and ALBERT go into the shop as MUSKERRY enters from left]

[MUSKERRY is untidily dressed. His boots are unlaced. He walks across the room and speaks pettishly]

MUSKERRY. They haven't brought my soup yet. They won't give much of their time to me. I'm disappointed in Anna Crilly. Well, a certain share in this shop was to have gone to Anna Crilly. I'll get that share, and I'll hoard it up myself. I'll hoard it up. And the fifty pounds of my pension, I'll hoard that up, too.

[ALBERT comes in from shop]

MUSKERRY. That's a black fire that's in the grate. I don't like the coal that comes into this place.

ALBERT. Coal, eh, grandpapa.

MUSKERRY. I said coal.

ALBERT. We haven't good st here.

MUSKERRY. Confound you for insolence.

ALBERT. Somebody you know in the shop — Felix Tournour.

MUSKERRY. Bid Tournour come to me.

ALBERT [talking into the shop]. You wanted here, Tournour. Come in, or I'll entertain the boss with "Devil's Rambles." [He turns to MUSKERRY] I was given the job of stock-taking.

MUSKERRY. That's a matter yourself.

ALBERT. I don't think I'll take job now.

MUSKERRY. Why won't you take?

ALBERT. I don't know what to do about the fifty tons of coal.

MUSKERRY. I was too precipitant about the coal. But don't have me the loss of fifty pounds through any of your smartness.

ALBERT. All right, grandfather; see you through.

MUSKERRY. Confound you for puppy.

[FELIX TOURNOUR enters. He is prosperous. He has on a loud check suit. He wears a red tie and a peaked cap]

ALBERT. The Master wants to speak to you, Tournour.

TOURNOUR. What Master?

ALBERT. The boss, Tournour, the boss.

MUSKERRY. I want you, and the fifty pounds enough for you, Tournour.

ALBERT. I suppose you don't like being grandpapa, that Tournour has a splendid high position in the Poorhouse.

MUSKERRY. What are you saying?

ALBERT. Tournour is Ward-master now.

MUSKERRY. I wasn't given notice of that.

ALBERT. Eh, Tournour —

"The Devil went out for a ramble at night. Through Garrisowen Union to see every street. He saw Felix Tournour —

TOURNOUR.

"He saw one in comfort, of that you're sure.

With his back to the fire stands Felix Tournour."

[He puts his back to the fire]

ALBERT. Well, so-long, gents.
[He goes out by shop door]
 MUSKERRY. Let me see you, Tournour.
 TOURNOUR. I'm plain to be seen.
 MUSKERRY. Who recommended you Ward-master?
 TOURNOUR. Them that had the er.
 MUSKERRY. I would not have done Tournour.
 TOURNOUR. No. And still, d'ye see, up and not down. Well, I'll be g.
 MUSKERRY. Come back here, Tournour. I made it a rule that no Ward-master should let drink be brought in to paupers.
 TOURNOUR. It's a pity you're not ster still!
 MUSKERRY. What are you saying?
 TOURNOUR. It's a pity that you're still the Master over us.
 MUSKERRY. Tournour, you're forcing yourself.
 TOURNOUR. Well, maybe you are the Master.
 MUSKERRY. How dare you speak me with such effrontery? How dare ?
 TOURNOUR. I dunno. I'm going y now, if your *honour* has nothing e to say to me. *[He turns to go]*
 MUSKERRY. You shall not. You l not, I say.
 TOURNOUR. What?
 MUSKERRY. You shall not go away l you've apologised to me.
 TOURNOUR. Don't be talking, mas Muskerry. You're not Master me.
 MUSKERRY. Not the Master over ?
 TOURNOUR. No. There's an end to r sway, Mr. Muskerry.
 MUSKERRY. Go out of the house. stay here. You think I'm out of Workhouse. No. That's not so. claims, great claims, on it still. for nothing was I there for thirty s, the pattern for the officials of and.
 TOURNOUR. Twenty-nine years, I'm g you.
 MUSKERRY. The Guardians will take unt of me.
 TOURNOUR. And maybe they would,
 MUSKERRY. What's that you're say-
 TOURNOUR. The Guardians might

take an account of Thomas Muskerry in a way he mightn't like.
[He goes to door]
 MUSKERRY. Come back here, Felix Tournour.
 TOURNOUR. I'm not your sub-servant.
 MUSKERRY. Stand here before me.
 TOURNOUR. Yu and your before me! Your back to heaven and your belly to hell.
 MUSKERRY. Go away. Go away out of this.
 TOURNOUR. Don't try to down-face me. I know something about you.
 MUSKERRY. About me!
 TOURNOUR. Aye, you and your fifty tons of coal. *[MUSKERRY goes back from him]* Great claims on the Work-house have you. The Guardians will take account of you. Will they? Talk to them about the fifty tons of coal. Go and do that, my pattern of the officials of Ireland!
[TOURNOUR goes out by shop. MUSKERRY stands with his hands on the armchair]
 MUSKERRY. This minute I'll go down to the Guardians and make my complaint. *[He notices his appearance]* I'm going about all day with my boots unlaced. I'm falling into bad ways, bad, slovenly ways. And my coat needs brushing, too. *[He takes off his coat and goes to window and brushes it]* That's Myles Gorman going back to the Work-house. I couldn't walk with my head held as high as that. In this house I am losing my uprightness. I'll do more than lace my boots and brush my coat. I'll go down to the Guardians and I'll pay them back their fifty pounds.
[ANNA CRILLY comes in from left with a bowl of soup]
 ANNA. Here's your soup, grandpapa.
 MUSKERRY. I can't take it now, Anna. *[He puts on his coat]*
 ANNA. Are you going out, grandpapa?
 MUSKERRY. I'm going before the meeting of the Board of Guardians.
 ANNA. Are you, grandpapa?
 MUSKERRY. Yes, Anna, I am. I'm going to pay them back their fifty pounds.
 ANNA. And have you the fifty pounds?
 MUSKERRY. Your mother has it for me.

ANNA. Sit down, grandpapa, and take your soup.

MUSKERRY. No, Anna, I won't take anything until my mind is at rest about the coal. A certain person has spoken to me in a way I'll never submit to be spoken to again.

[MRS. CRILLY comes in]

MRS. CRILLY. What has happened to you?

MUSKERRY. Felix Tournour knows about the coal, Marianne. He can disgrace me before the world.

ANNA. And grandpapa wants to go before the Guardians and pay them back the fifty pounds.

MRS. CRILLY. Wait until we consult Mr. Scollard.

[ANNA goes out]

MUSKERRY. No, Marianne. I'm not going to be a party to this any longer. I'm going before the Guardians, and I'll pay them back their fifty pounds.

MRS. CRILLY. Fifty pounds. From what place is fifty pounds to come so easily?

MUSKERRY. I'll ask you to give me the fifty pounds, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. I'll do no such thing. Anna is getting married, and she claims her fortune.

MUSKERRY. Anna getting married. This was kept from me. And who is Anna getting married to?

MRS. CRILLY. To James Scollard.

MUSKERRY. To James Scollard. And so Anna is getting married to my successor, James Scollard. My successor. How well I knew there was some such scheme behind shifting me out of the Workhouse. And Anna Crilly was against me all the time. Well, well, well. I'll remember this.

MRS. CRILLY. I'm at great losses since you came here.

MUSKERRY. I'm at greater losses, Marianne.

MRS. CRILLY. What losses are you at?

MUSKERRY. The loss of my trust, the loss of my dignity, my self-respect, and —

MRS. CRILLY. I think we did all we could for you.

MUSKERRY. I'm going out now to pay back the Guardians the sum due to them from me. I want fifty pounds from you. I claim it, and I have a right to claim it.

MRS. CRILLY. We have no money at all. Listen. Crofton Crilly backed a bill for James Covey, and three hun-

dred pounds has been taken from account.

MUSKERRY. Three hundred pounds.

MRS. CRILLY. Yes. Three hundred pounds.

MUSKERRY. He backed a bill three hundred pounds. And do think, Marianne Crilly, there could any luck, in a house where such a could happen? I tell you there luck nor grace in your house. *[He on his hat and goes to cupboard to get stick. He opens the cupboard. He round. Greatly moved].* My God! God. I'm made cry at the things happen in this house.

MRS. CRILLY. What is it?

MUSKERRY. The good meat brought in. There it is on the and the cat mangling it. I'll go out this house, and I'll never put foot it again.

MRS. CRILLY. And where will go?

MUSKERRY. I'll go before the Board of Guardians and I'll ask them to provide for me.

MRS. CRILLY. What do you me to do for you?

MUSKERRY. Give me fifty pounds so that I can pay them off now.

MRS. CRILLY. Haven't I told you the way I'm straitened for money?

MUSKERRY. You have still in bank what would save my name.

MRS. CRILLY. Don't be unreasonable. I have to provide for my children.

MUSKERRY. Your children. you have to provide for your children. I provided for them long enough. And now you would take my place of honour, and my self-respect, and provide for them over again. *[He goes]*

MRS. CRILLY. I'll have to put up with this, too.

[ANNA re-enters]

ANNA. Where has he gone, mother?

MRS. CRILLY. He has gone down to the Workhouse.

ANNA. What is he going to do, mother?

MRS. CRILLY. He says he will pay the Guardians to provide for him.

ANNA. It's not likely they'll do for a man with a pension of fifty pounds a year.

MRS. CRILLY. I don't know what will happen to us.

ANNA. He'll come back, mother.

MRS. CRILLY. He will. But every-
ing will have been made public, and
money will have to be paid.

ANNA [at the window]. There he is
going down the street, mother.

MRS. CRILLY. Which way?

ANNA. Towards the Workhouse.
Here's the doctor's daughter com-
ing into the shop again, mother.

MRS. CRILLY. I'll go out and see
myself. [As she goes out she hands
ANNA a cheque] That's the last cheque
I shall be able to make out. There's your
twenty pounds, Anna.

[She goes into the shop]

ANNA. We can begin to get the
picture now.

[She sits down at the table and
makes some calculation with a
pencil]

[CURTAIN]

ACT III

*infirm ward in the Workhouse. En-
trance from corridor, right. Forward,
left, are three beds with bedding
folded upon them. Back, left, is a
door leading into Select Ward. This
door is closed, and a large key is
in lock. Fireplace with a grating
around it, left. Back, right, is a
window with little leaded panes.*

*It is noon on a May day, but the light in-
side the ward is feeble.*

*Five paupers are seated at fire. One of
them, MICKIE CRISES, is a man of
fifty, stooped and hollow-chested, but
with quick blue eyes. The other man,
TOM SHANLEY, is not old, but he
looks broken and listless. MYLES
GORMAN, still in pauper dress, is
standing before window, an expect-
ant look on his face.*

THOMAS MUSKERRY enters from corridor.
He wears his own clothes, but he has
let them get into disorder. His hair
and beard are disordered, and he
seems very much broken down.
Nevertheless, he looks as if his mind
were composed.

MUSKERRY. It's dark in here,
Michael.

CRIPES. It is, sir.

MUSKERRY. I find it very spiritless
coming up from the chapel. Don't
leave your whole day here. Go down

into the yard. [He stands before the
window] This is the first fine day, and
you ought to go out along the country
road. Ask the Master for leave. It's
the month of May, and you'll be glad
of the sight of the grass and the smell
of the bushes. Now here's a remarkable
thing. I venture to think that the like
of this has never happened before.
Here are the bees swarming at the
window pane.

GORMAN. You'll hear my pipes on
the road to-day. That's as sure as the
right hand is on my body.

[He goes out by corridor door]

CRIPES. Myles Gorman must have
been glad to hear that buzzing.

MUSKERRY. Why was Myles glad
to hear it?

SHANLEY. He was leaving on the
first fine day.

CRIPES. The buzzing at the pane
would let any one know that the air
is nice for a journey.

MUSKERRY. I am leaving to-day,
myself.

CRIPES. And where are you going,
Mr. Muskerry?

MUSKERRY. I'm going to a place of
my own.

[MUSKERRY goes into the Select
Ward]

CRIPES. I'll tell you what brought
Thomas Muskerry back to the Work-
house to be an inmate in it. Living in a
bad house. Living with his own. That's
what brought him back. And that's
what left me here, too.

SHANLEY [listlessly]. The others have
the flour, and we may hawk the bran.

[An OLD PAUPER comes into the ward.

*His face looks bleached. He has
the handle of a sweeping-brush for a
staff. He moves about the ward,
muttering to himself. He seats him-
self on chair, right]*

THE OLD MAN [speaking as if think-
ing aloud]. I was at twelve o'clock
Mass. Now one o'clock would be a late
Mass. I was at Mass at one o'clock.
Wouldn't that be a long time to keep a
priest, and he fasting the whole time?

CRIPES. I'll tell you what Thomas
Muskerry did when he left the bad
house he was in.

[He puts coal on the fire]

THE OLD MAN. I was at one o'clock
Mass in Skibbereen. I know where
Skibbereen is well. In the County

CORK. Cork is a big county. As big as Dublin and Wicklow. That's where the people died when there was the hunger.

CRIPES. He came before the meeting of the Guardians, and he told them he owed them the whole of his year's pension. Then he got some sort of a stroke, and he broke down. And the Guardians gave him the Select Ward there for himself.

SHANLEY. They did well for him.

CRIPES. Why wouldn't they give him the Select Ward? It's right that he'd get the little room, and not have to make down the pauper's bed with the rest of us.

SHANLEY. He was at the altar to-day, and he stayed in the chapel after Mass.

CRIPES. He'll be here shortly.

THE OLD MAN. Skibbereen! That's where the people died when there was the hunger. Men and women without coffins, or even their clothes off. Just buried. Skibbereen I remember well, for I was a whole man then. And the village. For there are people living in it yet. They didn't all die.

SHANLEY. We'll have somebody else in the Select Ward this evening.

CRIPES. That's what they were talking about. The nuns are sending a patient up here.

SHANLEY. I suppose the Ward-master will be in here to regulate the room.

[He rises]

CRIPES. Aye, the Ward-master. Felix Tournour, the Ward-master. You've come to your own place at last, Felix Tournour.

SHANLEY. Felix Tournour will be coming the master over me if he finds me here.

[SHANLEY goes out]

CRIPES. Felix Tournour! That's the lad that will be coming in with his head up like the gander that's after beating down a child.

[CHRISTY CLARKE enters. He carries a little portmanteau]

CHRISTY. Is Mr. Muskerry here?

CRIPES. He's in the room. [A sound of water splashing and the movements of a heavy person are heard] Will you be speaking with him, young fellow?

CHRISTY. I will.

CRIPES. Tell him, like a good little boy, that the oul' men would be under a favour to him if he left a bit of tobacco. You won't forget that?

CHRISTY. I won't forget it.

CRIPES. I don't want to be in way of Felix Tournour. We're g down to the yard, but we'll see Muskerry when he's going away.

[CRIPES goes]

MUSKERRY [within]. Is that Christy Clarke?

CHRISTY. It is, Mr. Muskerry.

MUSKERRY. Have you any n Christy?

CHRISTY. No news, except that mother is in the cottage, and is peeping you to-day.

MUSKERRY. I'll be in the cot to-day, Christy. I'm cleaning my [A sound of splashing and moving away] The Guardians were good to get little house for me. I'd as lieve there as in a mansion. There's a half an acre of land to the place, I'll do work on the ground from time, for it's a good thing for a man get the smell of the clay.

CHRISTY. And how are you health, Mr. Muskerry?

MUSKERRY. I'm very well in he I was anointed, you know, and a that I mended miraculously.

CHRISTY. And what about the sion?

MUSKERRY. I'm getting three l dred pounds. They asked me to re the pension. I hope I have life end before me.

[He comes out. He has on trou coat, and starched shirt. shirt is soiled and crushed]

MUSKERRY. On Saturdays I'll my marketing. I'll come into the t and I'll buy the bit of meat for dinner on Sunday. But what are doing with this portmanteau, Chris

CHRISTY. I'm going away mysel

MUSKERRY. To a situation, is i

CHRISTY. To a situation in Dub

MUSKERRY. I wish you luck, Chri [He shakes hands with the boy, and down on a chair] I was dreaming new things all last night. New sh new sheets, everything new.

CHRISTY. I want to be somethi

MUSKERRY. What do you wan be?

CHRISTY. A writer.

MUSKERRY. A writer of books, i

CHRISTY. Yes, a writer of books

MUSKERRY. Listen, now, and me do you hear anything. That's sound of bees swarming at the wind That's a good augury for you, Chri

CHRISTY. All life's before me.
 MUSKERRY. Will you give heed to at I tell you?
 CHRISTY. I'll give heed to it, Mr. Muskerry.
 MUSKERRY. Live a good life.
 CHRISTY. I give heed to you.
 MUSKERRY. Your mother had great dship in rearing you.
 CHRISTY. I know that, Mr. Muskerry, but now I'm able for the world.
 MUSKERRY. I wish success to all r efforts. Be very careful of your sonal appearance.
 CHRISTY. I will, Mr. Muskerry.
 MUSKERRY. Get yourself a new vat before you leave the town.
 CHRISTY. I'll get it.
 MUSKERRY. I think I'd look better self if I had a fresher shirt.
 CHRISTY. I saw clean shirts of yours ore the fire last night in my mother's se.
 MUSKERRY. I wish I could get one ore I leave this place.
 CHRISTY. Will I run off and get one you?
 MUSKERRY. Would you, Christy? ould it be too much trouble?
 [MUSKERRY rises]
 CHRISTY. I'll go now.
 MUSKERRY. You're a very willing , Christy, and you're sure to get [He goes to a little broken mirror on wall] I am white and loose of flesh, that's not a good sign with me, istry. I'll tell you something. If vere staying here to-night, it's the per's bed I'd have to sleep on.
 [MRS. CRILLY comes to the door]
 MRS. CRILLY. Well, I see you're king ready for your departure.
 MUSKERRY [who has become uneasy]. n ready for my departure.
 MRS. CRILLY. And this young man come for you, I suppose?
 MUSKERRY. This young man is ading his own business.
 CHRISTY. I'm going out now to get irt for the Master.
 MRS. CRILLY. A starched shirt, I pose, Christy. Go down to our se, and tell Mary to give you one he shirts that are folded up.
 MUSKERRY. The boy will go where was bid go.
 MRS. CRILLY. Oh, very well. Run, istry, and do the message for the ster. [CHRISTY CLARKE goes out]
 MUSKERRY. I don't know what ught you here to-day.

MRS. CRILLY. Well, I wanted to see you.
 MUSKERRY. You could come to see me when I was settled down.
 MRS. CRILLY. Settled in the cottage the Guardians have given you?
 MUSKERRY. Yes, ma'am.
 MRS. CRILLY [with nervous excitement, restrained]. No one of us will ever go near the place.
 MUSKERRY. Well, you'll please yourself.
 MRS. CRILLY. You put a slight on us all when you go there to live.
 MUSKERRY. Well, I've lived with you to my own loss.
 MRS. CRILLY. Our house is the best house in the town, and I'm the nearest person to you.
 MUSKERRY. Say nothing more about that.
 MRS. CRILLY. Well, maybe you do right not to live with us, but you ought not to forsake us altogether.
 MUSKERRY. And what do you mean by forsaking you altogether?
 MRS. CRILLY. When you leave the place and do not even turn your step in our direction it's a sign to all who want to know that you forsake us altogether.
 MUSKERRY. What do you want me to do?
 MRS. CRILLY. Come up to Cross Street with me, have dinner and spend the night with us. People would have less to talk about if you did that.
 MUSKERRY. You always have a scheme.
 MRS. CRILLY. Come to us for this evening itself.
 MUSKERRY. I wish you wouldn't trouble me, woman. Can't you see that when I go out of this I want to go to my own place?
 MRS. CRILLY. You can go there to-morrow.
 MUSKERRY. Preparations are made for me.
 MRS. CRILLY. You don't know what preparations.
 MUSKERRY. Two pounds of the best beef-steak were ordered to be sent up to-day.
 MRS. CRILLY. I wouldn't trust that woman, Mrs. Clarke, to cook potatoes.
 MUSKERRY. Well, I'll trust her, ma'am.
 MRS. CRILLY [taking MUSKERRY's sleeve]. Don't go to-day, anyway.
 MUSKERRY. You're very anxious

to get me to come with you. What do you want from me?

MRS. CRILLY. We want nothing from you. You know how insecure our business is. When it's known in the town that you forsake us, everybody will close in on us.

MUSKERRY. God knows I did everything that a man could do for you and yours. I won't forget you. I haven't much life left to me, and I want to live to myself.

MRS. CRILLY. I know. Sure I lie awake at night, too tired to sleep, and long to get away from the things that are pressing in on me. I know that people are glad of their own way, and glad to live in the way that they like. When I heard the birds stirring I cried to be away in some place where I won't hear the thing that's always knocking at my head. The business has to be minded, and it's slipping away from us like water. And listen, if my confinement comes on me and I worried as I was last year, nothing can save me. I'll die, surely.

MUSKERRY [*moved*]. What more do you want me to do?

MRS. CRILLY. Stay with us for a while, so that we'll have the name of your support.

MUSKERRY. I'll come back to you in a week.

MRS. CRILLY. That wouldn't do at all. There's a reason for what I ask. The town must know that you are with us from the time you leave this.

MUSKERRY [*with emotion*]. God help me with you all, and God direct me what to do.

MRS. CRILLY. It's not in you to let us down.

[MUSKERRY turns away. His head is bent. MRS. CRILLY goes to him]

MUSKERRY. Will you never be done taking from me? I want to leave this and go to a place of my own.

[MUSKERRY puts his hand to his eyes. When he lowers his hand again MRS. CRILLY lays hers in it. CHRISTY CLARKE comes in. MUSKERRY turns to him. MUSKERRY has been crying]

MUSKERRY. Well, Christy, I'll be sending you back on another message.

[MRS. CRILLY makes a sign to CHRISTY not to speak]

MUSKERRY. Go to your mother and tell her —

CHRISTY. I met my mother side.

MUSKERRY. Did she get the things that were sent to her?

CHRISTY. My mother was sent away from the cottage.

MUSKERRY. Who sent your mother away from the cottage?

CHRISTY. Mrs. Crilly sent her away.

MUSKERRY. And why did you do that, ma'am?

MRS. CRILLY. I sent Mary to go to prepare the place for you, and that woman was impertinent to Mary —

MUSKERRY. Well, ma'am?

MRS. CRILLY. I sent the woman away.

MUSKERRY. And so you take it upon yourself to dispose of the servant in my house?

MRS. CRILLY. I daresay you'll be the woman's part against my daughter.

MUSKERRY. No, ma'am, I'll be on no one's side, but I'll tell you this: I want my own life, and I won't be interfered with.

MRS. CRILLY. I'm sorry for what occurred, and I'll apologise to the boy for what mother if you like.

MUSKERRY. I won't be interfered with, I tell you. From this day I'm free of my own life. And I'll tell Christy Clarke, go downstairs and tell the Master, Mr. Scollard, that I want to see him.

[CHRISTY CLARKE goes]

MRS. CRILLY. I may as well tell you something else. None of the things you ordered were sent up to the cottage.

MUSKERRY. Do you tell me that?

MRS. CRILLY. I went round to the shop, and everything you ordered was sent to us.

MUSKERRY. And what is the meaning of that, ma'am?

MRS. CRILLY. If the town knew we were going from us, in a week we would have to put up the shutters.

MUSKERRY. Well, I'll walk out this, and when I come to the road I'll go my own way.

MRS. CRILLY. We can't prevent you.

MUSKERRY. No, ma'am, you can't prevent me.

MRS. CRILLY. You've got your own charge, I suppose?

MUSKERRY. I've given three hours' notice, and I'll get my discharge now.

MRS. CRILLY [*at corridor door*]. I can't prevent you going if you have the doctor's discharge.

MUSKERRY. The doctor's discharge! would have given it to me —

MRS. CRILLY. You can't leave without the doctor's sanction.

MUSKERRY. Out of this house I will to-day. [JAMES SCOLLARD enters]

SCOLLARD. I believe you want to see, Mr. Muskerry.

MUSKERRY. I do, Mr. Scollard. In leaving the house.

SCOLLARD. I will be glad to take up any necessary formalities for you, Mr. Muskerry.

MRS. CRILLY. First of all, has the doctor marked my father off the infirmary list?

SCOLLARD. No, Mrs. Crilly. Now if I recall the list, he has not.

MUSKERRY. I waited after Mass to-day, and I missed seeing him.

MRS. CRILLY. My father was seriously ill only a short time ago, and I do believe he is in a fit state to leave the infirmary.

SCOLLARD. That certainly has to be considered. Without the doctor explicitly sending you down to the body of the house you are hardly under my sanction, Mr. Muskerry.

MUSKERRY. Mr. Scollard, I ask you to give me leave to go out of the Workhouse for a day. You can do this on your own responsibility.

MRS. CRILLY. In the present state of his mind it's not likely he would return to-night. Then if anything happened him your situation is at ease.

MUSKERRY. I'm not a pauper. I'll be out of this to-day without leave or expense from any of you.

SCOLLARD. As you know yourself, Mr. Muskerry, it would be as much as your situation is worth to let you depart that way.

MUSKERRY. Well, go I will.

SCOLLARD. I cannot permit it, Mr. Muskerry. I say it with the greatest respect.

MUSKERRY. How long will you keep me here?

SCOLLARD. Until the doctor visits the house.

MUSKERRY. That will be on Monday-morning.

SCOLLARD. And this is Saturday, Mr. Muskerry.

MUSKERRY. And where will you keep me until Monday?

SCOLLARD. Other arrangements will be made for you.

MUSKERRY. It's the pauper's bed you would give me!

SCOLLARD. The old arrangements will continue. Can I do anything further for you, Mr. Muskerry?

MUSKERRY. No, you can do nothing further for me. It's a great deal you have done for me! It's the pauper's bed you have given me!

[He goes into the Select Ward]

MRS. CRILLY. Sit down, Mr. Scollard. I want to speak to you.

[MRS. CRILLY seats herself at the table. SCOLLARD sits down also]

MRS. CRILLY. The bank manager is in the town to-day, and there are people waiting to tell him whether my father goes to our house or goes away from us.

SCOLLARD. No doubt there are, Mrs. Crilly.

MRS. CRILLY. But you have nothing to do with that, Mr. Scollard.

SCOLLARD. No, Mrs. Crilly.

MRS. CRILLY. I have my own battle to fight, and a hard battle it is. I have to make bits of myself to mind everything and be prepared for everything.

SCOLLARD. No doubt, Mrs. Crilly.

MRS. CRILLY. There are people who will blame me, but they cannot see into my mind.

SCOLLARD. Will you come down to the parlour, Mrs. Crilly?

MRS. CRILLY. Yes, I'll go down.

[She remains seated, looking out steadily before her. MYLES GORMAN comes in. He is dressed in his own clothes]

SCOLLARD. Well, Gorman, what brings you back to the ward?

GORMAN. I just want to do something to my pipes, Master.

SCOLLARD. Very well, Gorman. You have your discharge, and you are free to leave.

GORMAN. Oh, in a while I'll be taking the road.

[He seats himself at the fire and begins to fix the bag of his pipes]

SCOLLARD. Now, Mrs. Crilly, come down to the parlour.

MRS. CRILLY. Yes.

SCOLLARD. Anna is waiting to see you.

MRS. CRILLY [rising]. He will be well cared for here.

SCOLLARD. He will, Mrs. Crilly. I will give him all attention.

MRS. CRILLY. He expected to be in a different place to-day, but delay does little harm.

SCOLLARD. Come down to the parlour, Mrs. Crilly, and drink a glass of wine with us.

[*They go out. The door of the Select Ward opens, and THOMAS MUSKERRY appears. He has got a stroke. His breathing makes a noise in his mouth. As he moves he lags somewhat at the right knee. He carries his right hand at his breast. He moves slowly across ward. FELIX TOURNOUR enters, carrying a bunch of keys*]

TOURNOUR. And where are you going?

MUSKERRY [*in a thickened voice*]. Ow — out.

[*Motioning with left hand. He moves across ward, and goes out on door of corridor*]

TOURNOUR. Well, you're not getting back to your snuggerly, my oul' cod. [*He goes into the Select Ward and begins to pitch MUSKERRY'S belongings into the outer ward. First of all come the pillows and clothes off the bed*] And there's your holy picture, and there's your holy book. [*He comes out holding another book in official binding. He opens it and reads*] "Marianne, born May the 20th, 1870." [*He turns back some pages and reads*] Thomas Muskerry wrote this, 1850 —

"In the pleasant month of May,
When the lambkins sport and play,

As I roved out for recreation,
I spied a comely maid,
Sequestered in the shade,

And on her beauty I gazed in admiration.

"I said I greatly fear

That Mercury will draw near,

As once he appeared unto Venus,
Or as it might have been

To the Carthaginian Queen,

Or the Grecian Wight called Polyphemus."

[*MUSKERRY comes back to the ward. He stands looking stupidly at the heap THOMAS has thrown out. TOURNOUR throws down the book. MUSKERRY goes towards the open door of the ward. FELIX TOURNOUR closes the door deliberately, turns the key and holds the key in his hand*]

TOURNOUR. You have no more to

do with your snug little ward, Muskerry.

[*He puts the key on his bunch goes out*]

MUSKERRY [*muttering with slack and cheeks*]. It's — it's — the pauper's bed they've given me.

GORMAN [*turning round his head*]. Who's there?

MUSKERRY. It's — it's — The Master.

GORMAN. Is that the Master?

MUSKERRY. It's — it's the pauper's bed they've given me.

GORMAN. Can I give you any help, Master?

MUSKERRY. I'll want to make the bed. Give me a hand to make the bed. [*GORMAN comes over to him*] My own sheet and blanket is here. I needn't lie on a pauper's sheet. What bed is this?

GORMAN. It's the middle Master. It's my own bed.

MUSKERRY [*helplessly*]. What will I take, then?

GORMAN. My bed. I won't be here.

MUSKERRY. And where are you going?

GORMAN. I'm leaving the house to-day. I'll be going on the roads.

MUSKERRY. Myles — Myles Gorman. The man that was with my family or friends. Myles Gorman. Help me to lay down the mattress. Where will you sleep to-night, Master Gorman?

GORMAN. At Mrs. Muirnan's house between this and the town of Ballinagh. I haven't the money to pay, but she'll give me the place to-night. Now, Master, I'll spread the sheet for you.

[*They spread the sheet on the stairs*]

MUSKERRY. Can you go down the stairs, Myles Gorman? I tried to go down the stairs and my legs failed me.

GORMAN. One of the men will lead me down.

MUSKERRY [*resting his hand on the wall and standing up*]. Sure one of the men will lead me down the stairs, to the bed.

[*MYLES GORMAN spreads the sheet on bed. He stands up, takes the pipes, and is ready to go*]

MUSKERRY becomes more feverish. [*He puts himself on the bed*]

MUSKERRY. Myles — Myles Gorman — come back.

GORMAN. What will I do for you, Master?

MUSKERERRY. Say a prayer for me.

GORMAN. What prayer will I say, mister?

MUSKERERRY. Say "God be good to Thomas Muskererry."

GORMAN [*taking off his hat*]. "God be good to Thomas Muskererry, the man who was good to the poor." Is that Master?

MUSKERERRY. That's — that's all.

[GORMAN goes to the door]

GORMAN. In a little while you'll hear my pipes on the road.

[*He goes out. There is the sound of heavy breathing from the bed. Then silence. The old pauper with the staff enters. He is crossing the ward when his attention is taken by the humming of the bees at the window pane. He listens for a moment*]

THE OLD PAUPER. A bright day, the clay on their faces. That's what I saw. And we used to be come from Mass and going to the coursing match. The hare flying and the dogs stretching after her up the hill. Fine men and fine men. I saw them all.

CHRISTY CLARKE comes in. He goes to the table for his bag. He sees the figure on the bed, and goes over]

CHRISTY. I'm going now, Mister Muskererry. Mister Muskererry! Mister

Muskererry! Oh! the Master is dead. [*He runs back to the door*] Mrs. Crilly. Mrs. Crilly. [*He goes back to the bed, and throws himself on his knees*] Oh! I'm sorry you're gone, Thomas Muskererry.

THE OLD PAUPER. And is he gone home, too! And the bees humming and all! He was the best of them. Each of his brothers could lift up their plough and carry it to the other side of the field. Four of them could clear a fair. But their fields were small and poor, and so they scattered.

[MRS. CRILLY comes in]
MRS. CRILLY. Christy Clarke, what is it?

CHRISTY. The Master is dead.

MRS. CRILLY. My God, my God!

CHRISTY. Will I go and tell them below?

MRS. CRILLY. No. Bring no one here yet. We killed him. When everything is known that will be known.

CHRISTY. I'll never forget him, I think.

MRS. CRILLY. What humming is that?

CHRISTY. The bees at the window pane. And there's Myles Gorman's pipes on the road.

[*The clear call of the pipes is heard*]

END OF PLAY

THE GODS OF THE MOUNTAIN

(1913)

BY LORD DUNSANY

LORD DUNSANY

THOSE who are steeped in present-day drama are thoroughly aware of the true import of Lord Dunsany's work. His appeal is the natural reaction against an era of realism, of problematical approach toward the facts of life, instituted by Henrik Ibsen, self-consciously preached by Bernard Shaw, and carried to the extreme of a scientific passion by Eugene Brieux. In the stifling atmosphere of clinical examination, where the fact is lauded as against the spirit, a refreshing zephyr, carrying with it an aroma which is neither of the land nor of the sea, has brought Lord Dunsany to his own.

Many times before have we had poets and dramatists representative of moods; but we have, after heralding these peculiar geniuses, seen their moods either drag them down, or be forsaken by them for something more permanent. Therefore, instead of talking with finality about the peculiar genius of Lord Dunsany, let us take him at his face value, and say that in this first period of his, which has been touched by the spiritual tumult of War, he represents an oasis in the desert of what has now become stagnant realism.

Lord Dunsany has not come upon us without an inheritance back of him. Apart from the fact that he is the eighteenth baron of his line, which in itself shows a well founded in Irish heraldry, after one has read his little plays it becomes early evident that his literary significance owes something to the Irish renaissance. We are told that he never would have thought of writing plays had it not been for the encouragement of W. B. Yeats, who will be remembered in the future quite as much for his services in giving us Synge as for his own poetic genius, displayed in the writing of "Cathleen ni Houlihan."

A reviewer, in the London *Bookman*, confesses that she approached Dunsany's "Fifty-one Tales" with a prejudice because the author was a "Lord"; but she, who did come to scoff, wrote a review sounding his praises.

The facts of Lord Dunsany's life have little to do with his genius or his point of view. His social position may have served to give him the ironical slant which is one of his most refreshing veins, and which often comes to the rescue in relieving him of a certain artificial gloom; his love of hunting, his outdoor freedom — one of these may be mingled in some way with his artistic expression. But Dunsany is a contradiction: aristocrat though he be, his sympathies are on the side of the peasant class in Ireland; fighter though he is in the cause of England, his political faith is one which cannot be entirely sympathetic with the political attitude of England. Had he not a spirit naturally concerned with art and beauty; had he not a mind pricked to a keen discernment of the follies of civilization, his is the temperament which very readily could have grown *blasé*. But there is something invigorating about Lord Dunsany, despite his detachment in all the things he writes.

Were he not Irish, with that inborn genius which the Irishman has for living in the atmosphere of unreality, once he has forsaken the real, we might declare that

Dunsany had taken the keynote of his work from Shelley's incomparable sonnet "Ozymandias." We might further assure ourselves that, spurred by the creative impulse of Matthew Arnold, in such of his poems as "The Buried Life" and "The Future", he was seeking, in all he wrote, for the real source of life, not to be found in any located history, but in those pristine times which are characteristic of imagination. Even as Arnold sang:

What girl
Now reads in her bosom as clear
As Rebekah read, when she sate
At eve by the palm-shaded well?
Who guards in her breast
As deep, as pellucid, a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

— so does Dunsany turn away from the dull, sluggish current of life in which he finds himself, and creates not only a theogony of his own invention, but a geography of the world as well.

It is a comparatively easy matter to fall into a mood, and to give one's self entirely to it. But Lord Dunsany's invention measures genius because of the fact that, even though his plays are lacking in the essential humanity which marks our greatest dramas, even though his gods are more irrevocable and more ironically revengeful than the Hebrew God, in their dealings with men, whatever he writes is fraught with the philosophic fervour which, though it be not original, nevertheless indicates his constant concern regarding the morals of existence.

Lord Dunsany has reigned supreme in American theatrical attention during recent years. He may be said to have come into his own in this period. A large people have been reading him since 1905, and some of his plays have graced the repertory of the Abbey Theatre since 1909. He has been a journalist, a theatre reviewer, and has published an essay on "Romance and the Modern Stage." The literary world has, therefore, had opportunity, in the past twelve years, to judge Dunsany. Yet, not until now has popularity fallen upon him. Wherever a small group of enthusiastic lovers of the play are to be found to-day, we may be certain of witnessing some amateur performance of one of Dunsany's very actable little pieces.

It is easy to sum up the general attitude of Lord Dunsany toward life. He is thoroughly convinced that machinery and the complications of modern existence have kept us from the immediate discovery of our more important life; that, to quote him, "too much information about the fads and fashions of empty life is stealing, year by year, the traditions and simplicity even of rural people." Yet, too, he creates a machinery of drama equally as complicated.

In his mythology, "The Gods of Pegāna", he declares that wisdom is not to be found in cities, nor is happiness to be found in wisdom; he insists that the gods, thousands of years ago, being in mirthful mood, cried out, "Let Us call up a man before Us that We may laugh in Pegāna." That is the philosophical stream permeating the dramas he has written. He is forever showing the smallness of man before the inevitable greatness of the gods of his own creation.

You find this attitude in "The Queen's Enemies", "The Gods of the Mountain", and "The Glittering Gate." Not only is this peculiar to him, but Lord Dunsany is one who does not recognize any good to man coming from life in cities.

stories and his plays ring the persistent note of wanting to escape, as Keats would say, being "in city pent." He chants this belief in "The Tents of the Gods"; it is the attitude which brings him much humour in that little tale he calls "The Hen."

One very quickly reaches the insistent note in Dunsany, even as one feels, after having read two or more of his plays, his insistent mood. It is dominant, whether in reviewing a play or whether he is estimating the poetical work of others. In 1910, he witnessed Synge's "Deirdre of the Sorrows", which was played in London, and he came away with the impression that it was not a drama native of Ireland; that it was too full of wonder. And to live is to wonder, according to Dunsany. "Dreams are true while they last", sang Tennyson, "and do we not live in dreams?" This is, likewise, Dunsany's question to us all. He is against the city, and against the half-penny newspaper life. But though he himself travels continually in an unknown land, he is not blind to man's attachment to earth.

Synge is never far away from the fields of men [he writes] — his is not the inspiration of the skylark remote from earth; our wonder at his fancy is as our wonder at the flight of the white owl low down near beautiful fields. And what things he has found there: new things even about death. There is in this play the old Greek defiance of death.

When Dunsany's enthusiasms are called into play, he is one who is willing to go high where his affections have fallen. His critical designation is generous, and he is as eager to credit Synge with characteristics applicable to Homer as he is to measure his peasant-poet friend, Francis Ledwidge, by the same standard. After reading Ledwidge's "Lyrics", we see, not the greatness of Homer, but the simple beauty of Wordsworth. Nevertheless, there is a boyish warmth to Lord Dunsany's appreciation. "Poets are all incomparable," he confesses, and then, with his suggestive irony, he adds, "It is only the versifiers who resemble the great ones." In paying a tribute to his peasant-poet, who later met death fighting with him in the Great War, he adds this hope, which must indeed measure his own hope, that "not many will be attracted to this book on account of the author being a peasant, but he come to be praised by the 'how-interesting' school; for know that neither in any class, nor in any country, nor in any age, shall you predict the downfall of a peasant, who touches the earth where he pleaseth and is bridled by whom he will."

It is said that when Dunsany was a boy his reading was watched carefully. It was confined mostly to the Bible, to Grimm and Hans Andersen, and to the literature and mythology of Greece. These were his models, and there are some enthusiastic adherents who see in Dunsany's prose the influence of the King James version of the Testaments; who measure his poetic imagination by the direct influence he had from Greek legend. They claim for him that he has invented a Fate of Pegāna as inevitable and as binding as the Fate which permeates the dramas of Sophocles and Euripides.

Lord Dunsany does not credit himself with such greatness. He is more modest in his adherents picture him. It is easy to see that he writes in his particular mood because, untaxed by cloying fact, his imagination is free to wander where it will. We give his genius credit for this ability to wander, and we take at its face value what he has to say regarding his workmanship. Facility moves his pen; and a confession is found in a letter claiming that "The Queen's Enemies" is the one

of his plays possessing a borrowed theme; he thus forestalls that critic who for the counterpart to this play in Professor Jerram's "*Anglice Reddenda*", under title of "*A Woman's Revenge*."

"It was not only easier, but more amusing, to imagine her character Queen'sj and all the names of her enemies than to be bothered with reading about her. And since she was a live woman, whenever the Sixth Dynasty was thriving in Egypt, I think she came a little more alive out of my fancy than she might have done out of some dusty book." In other words, Dunsany is forever pointing the way for one to escape facts, which are dull and belong by rights, as he confesses, "journalists, politicians, owners of encyclopedias, and manufacturers of untruths."

People are forever reading into Dunsany what he does not wish them to read. In his correspondence, he declares: "When I write of Babylon there are people who cannot see that I write of it for love of Babylon's ways, and they think of London still and our beastly Parliament."

Dunsany pleads that he needs no explanation; that whatever beauty is in his little plays of mood must be taken unanalyzed and in total effect. A close scrutiny would be justified only were the pieces fraught, as Synge's "*Riders to the Sea*" and "*The Shadow of the Glen*" are fraught, with human valuation. Dunsany declares that he wants "to write about men and women and the great forces that have been with them from their cradle up — forces that the centuries have neither aged nor weakened. Not about people who are so interested about the latest motor or motor that not enough remains when the trivial is sifted from them." Even at that, his people escape him in an ether which leaves us unmoved and curious.

He has selected for his themes very simple stories — "so simple," he writes, "that sometimes people of this complex age, being brought up in intricate surroundings, even fail to understand them." He will not have read into "*The Gods of Mountain*" anything more than that irony which comes when a person finally gets what he wants. Here are some beggars who wish to be gods, and pretend to be gods; the real gods come along and make them gods, and in the granting of their desires lie the punishment.

Writing to Stuart Walker, of the Portmanteau Theatre, who was about to produce on "*The Golden Doom*", Lord Dunsany referred to the time-element in his play. He said:

The "public" must needs know exactly "when it all happened", so I never neglect to inform them of the time. Since man does not alter, it does not matter in the least what time I put, unless I am writing a play about his clothes or his motor-car, so I put "about the time of the fall of Babylon." It seemed a nice breezy time, but "about the time of the invention of Carter's Pills" would of course do equally well. Well, the result was that they went to the British Museum and got the exact costumes of the period in Babylon, and it did very nicely. There are sure to have been people who said, "Now my children, you shall come to the theatre and enjoy yourselves, but at the same time you shall learn what it was really like in Babylon." The fact is the schoolmaster has got loose and he must be caged, so that people can enjoy themselves without being pounced on and made to lead better lives, like African natives being carried away by lions while they danced.

This is quoted because so little has been written about Lord Dunsany that we have to rely entirely on his self-revealed spirit to judge wherein the manner of the man and the mood of his plays are one. Not only must the gods be laughing a little at our over-estimate of Lord Dunsany, but he himself must be chuckling at the ease with which he has "put it over" on his admirers. One accepts all his parables in the "Fifty-one Tales", and finds in them agreeableness of style, clarity of thought, striking poetic expression, and the kind of irony one falls into when reading La Fontaine for some time, though La Fontaine beats him at the human game. No critic will deny him one bit of the inherent genius which such imaginative work requires — such a style is easy to imitate, but not so easy to originate. Nor is story-telling acquired through imitation. Lord Dunsany's creative power has literally come from himself. However much a reader of fairy tales he may have been in his youth, however much people may say that they could easily learn the "trick" by saturating themselves in the "Arabian Nights", the fact remains that Lord Dunsany correlates imaginative facility with marked skill in story-telling.

To the historian of the drama a chronological arrangement of Dunsany's plays may be suggestive. But, in fairness to him, we must take in bulk the seven little dramas we have seen and read, determining therefrom whether he has yet mastered the one-act form; whether, from the act divisions of "The Gods of the Mountain", "King Argimenes", he would be capable, in the future, of mastering the longer form of play writing. It is our opinion that the Dunsany mood, as he now has mastered it, would not spread effectively over a wide surface without the introduction of a more human element; without dealing with more passion than one finds in such beautiful little pieces as "The Tents of the Arabs", which is Dunsany's irony-rendering cities coupled with some of his most feeling poetry. There is an historical play, "Alexander", yet to be published. It was started in collaboration with Francis Colum; but all that remains to mark that association is Colum's dedication prefixed to his drama, "Mogu the Wanderer." Is this Dunsany piece "located history"?

Relieved of the same machinery which, in his earlier period, bound Maeterlinck to certain formal expression, and which forever cast a peculiar shadow over the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, we do not realize as yet what Lord Dunsany would be. Certainly, such a quaint, frivolous conceit as "The Lost Silk Hat" could never forebode that he would be happy in the atmosphere of society drama. There is not one of his plays which, as yet, has hinted at a national consciousness, like Yeats's "Athleen ni Houlihan." He does not seem to be wedded to the cause of the Irish theatre. Nor has he, from the Irish standpoint, made use of the folklore of Ireland. Interested though he may be in preserving the peasant beauties of his own country, he has not himself come under that immediate influence, even though he is able to appreciate it when it appears.

What does he say further regarding the poetry of Synge? Speaking of his style, he writes:

New words like these on some great thing are needed in this age, when thought is becoming moulded in old phrases. . . . The simple homeliness of the words in this play ["Deirdre"] reveals both for Synge and for the peasants whom he knew a near familiarity with the world's great impulses such as war and spring. Great words are often wrapped round nothingness, as echoes are

loudest in the emptiest cave. Tawdriness dresses herself gorgeously. But when household words are used about the gods, we know that the gods are very near to the household.

It has been claimed for Lord Dunsany that even as his "Fifty-one Tales" may be taken as a dramatist's notebook, containing jottings which he may, or may not, utilize later in his work, so his little dramas are themselves the quintessence of reticence, wherein only essential dialogue is used. In proof of this, some enthusiasts are prone to compare his method with that of Maeterlinck, in the early "marmette" plays, like "The Princess Maleine", where repetition of dialogue is seemingly trivial in its value. There are passages in Dunsany which are likewise ineffectual in their repetition. But, in the last analysis, Maeterlinck's repetition is not unconscious; from it he wrings a psychological effect which Lord Dunsany does not completely obtain. However compelling "The Gods of the Mountain" and "Night at an Inn" may be, and these are Lord Dunsany at his high-water mark, we cannot, in any way, find a play of his whose greatness is comparable with Maeterlinck's "The Intruder." Yet Dunsany has been compared with the Greek. He has the weakness which always comes in the wake of romanticism, especially when romanticism will not compromise with realism. Dunsany is weighted with trappings which dull his psychology and its effect.

We may ask whether this dramatist has the power of individualizing characters. On close examination, we arrive at the conclusion that he can, though his characterization is of the slightest stroke. There is an individuality to *Agmar*, the beggar, in "The Gods of the Mountain", but his associates are a dead-level group as character goes, more so than Maeterlinck's blind in "The Blind" who at least show psychological variation.

One perceives differences of bearing in the two burglars who stand before "The Glittering Gate", but not those human peculiarities which would make us interested rather than curious in regard to what they are doing there. Even Dunsany's children in "The Golden Doom", about whom he has written, do not strike us with that simplicity, with that nearness to heaven about them that characterizes little *Yniold*, for instance, in Maeterlinck's "Pélleas and Mélisande."

Enthusiastic though one may be about Dunsany's plays, it is not wise to place his accomplishment too high in the rank of genius, though in him rests a most hopeful sign for the years to come. Were he to do nothing more, we might say that "The Gods of the Mountain" would establish him definitely in the history of modern drama, but would not place him above Synge, — nor even above Yeats, who, were he to fail in drama, would live in Irish poetry. Dunsany would, however, even on the merits of this one play, be unique and abundantly dramatic in an external way.

That Dunsany is sincerely interested in art may be seen from his financial contributions to the Irish Theatre as recorded by George Moore, and his contribution to the Theatre of Art in Florence, as recorded by Gordon Craig. His correspondence with Stuart Walker, of the Portmanteau Theatre, shows that, though his dramas are conceived with ease, there is a definiteness in his mind as to their interpretation. They are dramas that lend themselves very readily to the new scene, even as his tales called forth all that was creative in their original illustrator, Sir John. And in the same way that the new scenery has its limitations, so have the Dunsany dramas.

Dunsany has established a mannerism which is interesting, and all the more so, being at a time when people were growing impatient and weary of realism. In his plays there is none of that big, poetic quality, of that universal appeal, which characterizes Hazeltan and Benrimo's "The Yellow Jacket." They are both poetries, but "The Yellow Jacket", imitative though the work may be, of Chinese convention, has more claim to greatness, if not to depth. When one witnesses Dunsany's plays in succession, their mood begins to pall slightly, even as one sometimes tires of the thickness of Poe's morbid aroma.

At the Neighborhood Playhouse, in New York, "The Queen's Enemies" was given with scenery which encompassed the very large imaginative locality of the theatre. "A Night at an Inn" has been done in that same mysterious manner. Breathless pauses, sepulchral tones, and shadowy action punctuate all of Dunsany's dramas. Stuart Walker, in his Portmanteau Theatre, has given three of the little plays with dignity of bearing and richness of colour. They have proven effective because they have appealed to the wonder element which realistic dramas heretofore discounted. That is why Dunsany is so potent a factor at present.

We do not wish to rate him too highly; we wish to see a further development. He is only forty. But he is inclined to take a fatalistic attitude toward the part he is playing in the War. He escaped death in his campaign through the Transvaal during the Boer War, traces of an experience which critics joyously announce may be discovered in "King Argimenes." He has recovered from a wound received during the Dublin riots. Thus far, he has moved safely through battle in France. He writes:

Sometimes I think that no man is taken hence until he has done the work that he is here to do, and, looking back on five battles and other escapes from death, this theory seems only plausible; but how can one hold it when one thinks of the deaths of Shelley and Keats!

But in case I shall not be able to explain my work, I think the first thing to tell them [the public] is that it does not need explanation. One does not explain a sunset, nor does one need to explain a work of art. One may analyze, of course; that is profitable and interesting, but the growing demand to be told What It's All About before one can even enjoy becomes absurd.

Yes, the more we consider Lord Dunsany, the more we are reminded of Shelley's sonnet on "Ozymandias." He too is a traveller from an antique land, who has witnessed the crumbling city of Ozymandias, King of Kings.

As he wrote in barracks, on January 4, 1917, to a friend:

Well, I suppose I am a great traveller: of any country that I have ever been to I have scarcely ever written, — though all we see probably influences us, — but it is of the countries I have not travelled in that I have written, the longing for travel perhaps moving my pen, the spirit telling of lands where it had gone and the body had not followed. For instance, I have travelled a thousand miles up the Nile, and lived a while in the Sahara; and I have written a tale of a journey down a vast river called "Idle Days on the Yan", and a tale of the Sahara called "A Story of Land and Sea." But those tales were written before I made the journeys that might be supposed to have influenced them. "How inaccurate such tales must be," I can imagine some dull soul exclaiming; but to such a person I would say, "There are other things in the world than facts, my friend."

And I would leave him to go away and read Bradshaw, his railway guide, which is the quintessence of fact, unspoiled by style, fancy, philosophy, enthusiasm, mirth, or anything at all to stand in the way of a dull soul in silent communion with unromantic fact.

Let us be thankful that the theatre has such a man as this working for it. let us, in our sincere estimate of him, save Dunsany from his ecstatic friends.

THE GODS OF THE MOUNTAIN

By LORD DUNSANY

PERSONS

AGMAR . .	}	<i>Beggars</i>
SLAG . .		
ULF . .		
OOGNO . .		
THAHN . .		
MLAN . .		
A THIEF	}	
OORANDER	}	<i>Citizens</i>
ILLANAUN		
AKMOS . .		
THE DROMEDARY MEN		
CITIZENS, ETC.		
THE OTHERS		

SCENE: *The East*

CAST

First produced at the Haymarket Theatre, London, on June 1st, 1911, with the following cast:

GENO	} <i>Beggars</i>	Mr. W. A. Warburton
SAHN		Mr. Claude Rains
F		Mr. H. R. Hignett
MAR		Mr. Charles V. France
AG		Mr. Charles Maudo
THIEF		Mr. Lawrence Hanray
AN	} <i>Citizens</i>	Mr. R. P. Lamb
RANDER		Mr. J. Dickson Kenwin
MOS		Mr. Ernest Graham
ANAUN		Mr. Grindon Bentley
SHARA		Mr. F. G. Clifton
ULEK		Mr. G. Carr
OHARMAS		Mr. Kenneth Dennys
Z		Mr. B. Hatton Sinclair
EEDES		Mr. A. Jones
RA		Miss Anne Carew
ELUNZA		Miss E. Risdon
ONION ALARA		Miss V. Whitaker
AX		Miss M. Ronsard
KARNEES		Mr. Norman Page
DROMEDARY MAN		Mr. W. Black
NNEK OF THE MEADOWS		Miss Enid Rose
E OTHERS		Mr. E. Lyall Swete
		Mr. A. Ackerman
		Mr. K. Black
		Mr. H. Cooper
		Mr. E. Leverett
		Mr. G. Wilkinson
		Mr. J. O'Brien

The scenery was designed and painted by Mr. Walter Bayes, with the exception of the first set, for which designs were made by Mr. S. H. Sime.

CAST

On October 27th, 1916, "The Gods of the Mountain" was produced for a second time in America, by Stuart Walker, in his Portmanteau Theatre, at Mount Holyoke, Massachusetts. The cast, which subsequently played 28 performances during a repertory season in New York, was as follows:

ULF	} <i>Beggars</i>	Mr. Edgar Stehli
OOGNO		Mr. Lew Medbury
THAHN		Mr. Frank J. Zimmerer
AGMAR		Mr. Stuart Walker
SLAG		Mr. Gregory Kelly
A THIEF		Mr. Robert Cook
MLAN	} <i>Citizens</i>	Miss Agnes Rogers
BOORANDER		Mr. Willard Webster
ILLANAUN		Mr. Ward Thornton
AKMOS		Mr. McKay Morris
A MOTHER		Miss Florence Wollers
AN OLD WOMAN WHO SELLS WATER		Miss Judith Lowry
A DROMEDARY MAN		Mr. Edmond Crenshaw
A WOMAN WHO SINGS		Miss Dorothea Carother
A CHARMER OF SNAKES		Miss Gitruda Tritjanski

The scenes, costumes, and properties for this production were designed by Mr. Frank J. Zimmerer. Mr. Walker made use of music especially composed by Mr. Arthur Farwell.

THE GODS OF THE MOUNTAIN

ACT I

Outside a city wall. THREE BEGGARS are seated upon the ground]

OOGNO. These days are bad for beggary.

THAHN. They are bad.

ULF [*an older beggar but not gray*]. Some evil has befallen the rich ones of this city. They take no joy any longer in benevolence, but are become sour and miserly at heart. Alas for them! I sometimes sigh for them when I think of this.

OOGNO. Alas for them! A miserly heart must be a sore affliction.

THAHN. A sore affliction indeed, and bad for our calling.

OOGNO [*reflectively*]. They have been so for many months. What thing has befallen them?

THAHN. Some evil thing.

ULF. There has been a comet come near to the earth of late and the earth has been parched and sultry so that the gods are drowsy and all those things that are divine in man, such as benevolence, drunkenness, extravagance, and song, have faded and died and we have not been replenished by the gods.

OOGNO. It has indeed been sultry.

THAHN. I have seen the comet overheads.

ULF. The gods are drowsy.

OOGNO. If they awake not soon and make this city worthy again of our master I for one shall forsake the calling and buy a shop and sit at ease in the shade and barter for gain.

THAHN. You will keep a shop?

Enter AGMAR and SLAG. AGMAR, though poorly dressed, is tall, imperious, and older than ULF. SLAG follows behind him]

AGMAR. Is this a beggar who speaks?

OOGNO. Yes, master, a poor beggar.

AGMAR. How long has the calling of beggary existed?

OOGNO. Since the building of the first city, master.

AGMAR. And when has a beggar ever followed a trade? When has he ever haggled and bartered and sat in a shop?

OOGNO. Why, he has never done so. AGMAR. Are you he that shall be first to forsake the calling?

OOGNO. Times are bad for the calling here.

THAHN. They are bad.

AGMAR. So you would forsake the calling?

OOGNO. The city is unworthy of our calling. The gods are drowsy and all that is divine in man is dead. [To THIRD BEGGAR] Are not the gods drowsy?

ULF. They are drowsy in their mountains away at Marma. The seven green idols are drowsy. Who is this that rebukes us?

THAHN. Are you some great merchant, master? Perhaps you will help a poor man that is starving.

SLAG. My master a merchant! No, no. He is no merchant. My master is no merchant.

OOGNO. I perceive that he is some lord in disguise. The gods have woken and have sent him to save us.

SLAG. No, no. You do not know my master. You do not know him.

THAHN. Is he the Soldan's self that has come to rebuke us?

AGMAR. I am a beggar, and an old beggar.

SLAG [*with great pride*]. There is none like my master. No traveller has met with cunning like to his, not even those that come from Æthiopia.

ULF. We make you welcome to our town, upon which an evil has fallen, the days being bad for beggary.

AGMAR. Let none who has known the mystery of roads or has felt the wind arising new in the morning, or who has called forth out of the souls of men divine benevolence, ever speak any more of any trade or of the miserable gains of shops and the trading men.

OOGNO. I but spoke hastily, the times being bad.

AGMAR. I will put right the times.

SLAG. There is nothing that my master cannot do.

AGMAR [*To SLAG*]. Be silent and attend to me. I do not know this city. I have travelled from far, having somewhat exhausted the city of Ackara.

SLAG. My master was three times knocked down and injured by carriages there, once he was killed and seven times beaten and robbed, and every time he was generously compensated. He had nine diseases, many of them mortal —

AGMAR. Be silent, SLAG. — Have you any thieves among the calling here?

ULF. We have a few that we call thieves here, master, but they would scarcely seem thieves to you. They are not good thieves.

AGMAR. I shall need the best thief you have.

[*Enter two citizens, richly clad, ILLANAUN and OORANDER*]

ILLANAUN. Therefore we will send galleons to Ardaspes.

OORANDER. Right to Ardaspes through the silver gates.

[*AGMAR transfers the thick handle of his long staff to his left armpit, he droops on to it and it supports his weight; he is upright no longer. His right arm hangs limp and useless. He hobbles up to the citizens imploring alms*]

ILLANAUN. I am sorry. I cannot help you. There have been too many beggars here and we must decline alms for the good of the town.

AGMAR [*sitting down and weeping*]. I have come from far.

[*ILLANAUN presently returns and gives AGMAR a coin. Exit ILLANAUN.*

AGMAR, erect again, walks back to the others]

AGMAR. We shall need fine raiment; let the thief start at once. Let it rather be green raiment.

BEGGAR. I will go and fetch a thief. [*Exit*]

ULF. We will dress ourselves as lords and impose upon the city.

OOGNO. Yes, yes; we will say we are ambassadors from a far land.

ULF. And there will be good eating.

SLAG [*in an undertone to ULF*]. You do not know my master. Not that you have suggested that we should go as lords, he will make a better suggestion. He will suggest that we should go as kings.

ULF. Beggars as kings!

SLAG. Ay. You do not know my master.

ULF. [*To AGMAR*] What do you bid us do?

AGMAR. You shall first come by the fine raiment in the manner I have mentioned.

ULF. And what then, master?

AGMAR. Why, then we shall go as gods.

BEGGARS. As gods!

AGMAR. As gods. Know you the land through which I have lately come in my wanderings? Marma, where the gods are carved from green stone, the mountains. They sit all seven of them against the hills. They sit there motionless and travellers worship them.

ULF. Yes, yes, we know those gods. They are much revered here, but they are drowsy and send us nothing beautiful.

AGMAR. They are of green jade. They sit cross-legged with their right elbows resting on their left hands, and their right forefinger pointing upward. They will come into the city disguised, from the direction of Marma, and will claim to be these gods. We must be seen as they are. And when we sit we must sit cross-legged as they do, with our right hand uplifted.

ULF. This is a bad city in which to fall into the hands of oppressors, for the judges lack amiability here as the merchants lack benevolence, ever since the gods forgot them.

AGMAR. In our ancient calling a man may sit at one street corner for fifty years doing the one thing, and yet a day may come when it is wiser for him to rise up and do another thing while the timorous man starves.

ULF. Also it were well not to annoy the gods.

AGMAR. Is not all life a beggary before the gods? Do they not see all men

ays begging of them and asking
s with incense, and bells, and
tle devices?

OOGNO. Yes, all men indeed are
gars before the gods.

AGMAR. Does not the mighty Soldan
en sit by the agate altar in his royal
ple as we sit at a street corner or
a palace gate?

ULF. It is even so.

AGMAR. Then will the gods be glad
en we follow the holy calling with
devices and with subtlety, as they
glad when the priests sing a new
g.

ULF. Yet I have a fear.

[Enter TWO MEN, talking]

AGMAR. [To SLAG] Go you into
city before us and let there be a
phecy there which saith that the
s who are carven from green rock
the mountain shall one day arise in
rma and come here in the guise of
a.

SLAG. Yes, master. Shall I make
prophecy myself? Or shall it be
nd in some old document?

AGMAR. Let some one have seen it
e in some rare document. Let it
spoken of in the market place.

SLAG. It shall be spoken of, master.

AG lingers. Enter THIEF and THAHN]

OOGNO. This is our thief.

AGMAR [encouragingly]. Ah, he is a
ek thief.

THIEF. I could only procure you
ee green raiments, master. The
r is not now well supplied with
m; moreover, it is a very suspicious
r and without shame for the baseness
ts suspicions.

SLAG. [To a BEGGAR] This is not
yng.

THIEF. I could do no more, master.
ave not practised thieving all my life.

AGMAR. You have got something:
may serve our purpose. How long
re you been thieving?

THIEF. I stole first when I was ten.

SLAG [in horror]. When he was ten!

AGMAR. We must tear them up
l divide them amongst the seven.

THAHN] Bring me another beggar.

SLAG. When my master was ten
had already to slip by night out of
o cities.

OOGNO [admiringly]. Out of two
es?

SLAG [nodding his head]. In his
native city they do not now know
what became of the golden cup that
stood in the Lunar Temple.

AGMAR. Yes, into seven pieces.

ULF. We will each wear a piece of
it over our rags.

OOGNO. Yes, yes, we shall look fine.

AGMAR. That is not the way that
we shall disguise ourselves.

OOGNO. Not cover our rags?

AGMAR. No, no. The first who
looked closely would say, "These are
only beggars. They have disguised
themselves."

ULF. What shall we do?

AGMAR. Each of the seven shall
wear a piece of the green raiment
underneath his rags. And peradventure
here and there a little shall show
through; and men shall say, "These
seven have disguised themselves as
beggars. But we know not what they
be."

SLAG. Hear my wise master.

OOGNO [in admiration]. He is a
beggar.

ULF. He is an old beggar.

CURTAIN

ACT II

[The Metropolitan Hall of the city of
Kongros. CITIZENS, etc.]

[Enter the SEVEN BEGGARS with green
silk under their rags]

OORANDER. Who are you and
whence come you?

AGMAR. Who may say what we are
or whence we come?

OORANDER. What are these beggars
and why do they come here?

AGMAR. Who said to you that we
were beggars?

OORANDER. Why do these men come
here?

AGMAR. Who said to you that we
were men?

ILLANAUN. Now, by the moon!

AGMAR. My sister.

ILLANAUN. What?

AGMAR. My little sister.

SLAG. Our little sister the moon.
She comes to us at evenings away in
the mountains of Marma. She trips
over the mountains when she is young.

When she is young and slender she comes and dances before us, and when she is old and unshapely she hobbles away from the hills.

AGMAR. Yet is she young again and forever nimble with youth; yet she comes dancing back. The years are not able to curb her nor to bring gray hairs to her brethren.

OORANDER. This is not wanted.

ILLANAUN. It is not in accordance with custom.

AKMOS. Prophecy hath not thought it.

SLAG. She comes to us new and nimble, remembering olden loves.

OORANDER. It were well that prophets should come and speak to us.

ILLANAUN. This hath not been in the past. Let prophets come. Let prophets speak to us of future things.

[*The BEGGARS seat themselves upon the floor in the attitude of the SEVEN GODS OF MARMA*]

CITIZEN. I heard men speak to-day in the market place. They speak of a prophecy read somewhere of old. It says the seven gods shall come from Marma in the guise of men.

ILLANAUN. Is this a true prophecy?

OORANDER. It is all the prophecy we have. Man without prophecy is like a sailor going by night over uncharted seas. He knows not where are the rocks nor where the havens. To the man on watch all things ahead are black and the stars guide him not, for he knows not what they are.

ILLANAUN. Should we not investigate this prophecy?

OORANDER. Let us accept it. It is as the small, uncertain light of a lantern, carried it may be by a drunkard, but along the shore of some haven. Let us be guided.

AKMOS. It may be that they are but benevolent gods.

AGMAR. There is no benevolence greater than our benevolence.

ILLANAUN. Then we need do little: they portend no danger to us.

AGMAR. There is no anger greater than our anger.

OORANDER. Let us make sacrifice to them if they be gods.

AKMOS. We humbly worship you, if ye be gods.

ILLANAUN [*kneeling too*]. You are mightier than all men and hold high rank among other gods and are lords of this our city, and have the thunder

as your plaything and the whirlv and the eclipse and all the destinies human tribes — if ye be gods.

AGMAR. Let the pestilence not at once upon this city, as it had indeed designed to; let not the earthquake swallow it all immediately up as the howls of the thunder; let not infuriated armies overwhelm those escape — if we be gods —

POPULACE [*in horror*]. If we be gods

OORANDER. Come, let us sacrifice

ILLANAUN. Bring lambs.

AKMOS. Quick! Quick!

[*Exeunt*]

SLAG [*with solemn air*]. This god a very divine god.

THAHN. He is no common god.

MLAN. Indeed he has made us.

CITIZEN. [*To SLAG*] He will punish us, master? None of the gods will punish us? We will make sacrifice, a good sacrifice.

ANOTHER. We will sacrifice a lamb that the priests have blessed.

FIRST CITIZEN. Master, you are wroth with us?

SLAG. Who may say what clooms dooms are rolling up in the mind the eldest of the gods? He is no common god like us. Once a shepherd went by him in the mountains and doubted as he went. He sent a dog after that shepherd.

CITIZEN. Master, we have doubted.

SLAG. And the doom found us on the hills at evening.

SECOND CITIZEN. It shall be a good sacrifice, master.

[*Re-enter with a dead lamb and fruits. They offer the lamb on an altar where there is fire, and fruits before the altar*]

THAHN [*stretching out a hand to the lamb upon an altar*]. That leg is being cooked at all.

ILLANAUN. It is strange that gods should be thus anxious about the cooking of a leg of lamb.

OORANDER. It is strange certainly.

ILLANAUN. Almost I had said that it was a man spoke then.

OORANDER [*stroking his beard and regarding the SECOND BEGGAR*]. Strange, certainly.

AGMAR. Is it then strange that gods love roasted flesh? For this purpose they keep the lightning. Will

lightning flickers about the limbs
men there comes to the gods in
rma a pleasant smell, even a smell
roasting. Sometimes the gods, being
ific, are pleased to have roasted
ead the flesh of lamb. It is all
to the gods; let the roasting stop.
ORANDER. No, no, gods of the
untains!

OTHERS. No, no.

ORANDER. Quick, let us offer the
h to them. If they eat, all is well.

[They offer it; the BEGGARS eat,
all but AGMAR, who watches]

LLANAUN. One who was ignorant,
who did not know, had almost
d that they ate like hungry men.

OTHERS. Hush!

AKMOS. Yet they look as though
y had not had a meal like this for
ong time.

ORANDER. They have a hungry
K.

AGMAR [who has not eaten]: I have
eaten since the world was very
y and the flesh of men was tenderer
n now. These younger gods have
ned the habit of eating from the lions.
ORANDER. O oldest of divinities,
take, partake.

AGMAR. It is not fitting that such
should eat. None eat but beasts
men and the younger gods. The
and the moon and the nimble
tning and I — we may kill and we
y madden, but we do not eat.

AKMOS. If he but eat of our offer-
he cannot overwhelm us.

LL. Oh, ancient deity, partake,
take.

AGMAR. Enough. Let it be enough
t these have condescended to this
ial and human habit.

LLANAUN. [To AKMOS] And yet
is not unlike a beggar whom I saw
so long since.

ORANDER. But beggars eat.

LLANAUN. Now I never knew a
gar yet who would refuse a bowl of
ldery wine.

AKMOS. This is no beggar.

LLANAUN. Nevertheless let us offer
a bowl of Woldery wine.

AKMOS. You do wrong to doubt

LLANAUN. I do but wish to prove
divinity. I will fetch the Woldery
e. [Exit]

AKMOS. He will not drink. Yet if
loes, then he will not overwhelm us.
us offer him the wine.

[Re-enter ILLANAUN with a goblet]

FIRST BEGGAR. It is Woldery wine!

SECOND BEGGAR. It is Woldery!

THIRD BEGGAR. A goblet of Woldery
wine!

FOURTH BEGGAR. O blessed day!

MLAN. O happy times!

SLAG. O my wise master!

[ILLANAUN takes the goblet. All
the BEGGARS stretch out their
hands, including AGMAR. IL-
LANAUN gives it to AGMAR.
AGMAR takes it solemnly, and
very carefully pours it upon
the ground]

FIRST BEGGAR. He has spilt it.

SECOND BEGGAR. He has spilt it.

[AGMAR sniffs the fumes, loquitur]

AGMAR. It is a fitting libation. Our
anger is somewhat appeased.

ANOTHER BEGGAR. But it was Wol-
dery!

AKMOS [kneeling to AGMAR]. Master,
I am childless, and I —

AGMAR. Trouble us not now. It is
the hour at which the gods are accus-
tomed to speak to the gods in the
language of the gods, and if Man
heard us he would guess the futility
of his destiny, which were not well
for Man. Begone! Begone!

ONE LINGERS [loquitur]. Master —
AGMAR. Begone!

[Exeunt. AGMAR takes up a piece
of meat and begins to eat it;
the BEGGARS rise and stretch
themselves: they laugh, but
AGMAR eats hungrily]

OOGNO. Ah! Now we have come
into our own.

THAHN. Now we have alms.

SLAG. Master! My wise master!

ULF. These are the good days, the
good days; and yet I have a fear.

SLAG. What do you fear? There
is nothing to fear. No man is as wise
as my master.

ULF. I fear the gods whom we pre-
tend to be.

SLAG. The gods?

AGMAR [taking a chunk of meat from
his lips]. Come hither, SLAG.

SLAG [going up to him]. Yes, master.

AGMAR. Watch in the doorway while
I eat. [SLAG goes to the doorway]
Sit in the attitude of a god. Warn
me if any of the citizens approach.

[SLAG sits in the doorway in the
attitude of a god, back to the
audience]

OOGNO. [To AGMAR] But, master, shall we not have Woldery wine?

AGMAR. We shall have all things if only we are wise at first for a little.

THAHN. Master, do any suspect us?

AGMAR. We must be *very* wise.

THAHN. But if we are not wise, master?

AGMAR. Why, then death may come to us —

THAHN. O master!

AGMAR. — slowly.

[*All stir uneasily except SLAG, who sits motionless in the doorway*]

OOGNO. Do they believe us, master?

SLAG [*half turning his head*]. Someone comes.

[*SLAG resumes his position*]

AGMAR [*putting away his meat*]. We shall soon know now.

[*All take up the attitude. Enter ONE, loquitur*]

ONE. Master, I want the god that does not eat.

AGMAR. I am he.

ONE. Master, my child was bitten in the throat by a death-adder at noon. Spare him, master; he still breathes, but slowly.

AGMAR. Is he indeed your child?

ONE. He is surely my child, master.

AGMAR. Was it your wont to thwart him in his play, while he was strong and well?

ONE. I never thwarted him, master.

AGMAR. Whose child is Death?

ONE. Death is the child of the gods.

AGMAR. Do you that never thwarted your child in his play ask this of the gods?

ONE [*with some horror, perceiving AGMAR's meaning*]. Master!

AGMAR. Weep not. For all the houses that men have builded are the play-fields of this child of the gods.

[*The MAN goes away in silence, not weeping*]

OOGNO [*taking THAHN by the wrist*]. Is this indeed a man?

AGMAR. A man, a man, and until just now a hungry one.

CURTAIN

ACT III

Same room

A few days have elapsed

Seven thrones shaped like mountains crags stand along the back of stage. On these the BEGGARS are lounging. The THIEF is absent

MLAN. Never had beggars such time.

OOGNO. Ah, the fruits and tender lamb!

THAHN. The Woldery wine!

SLAG. It was better to see master's wise devices than to have fruit and lamb and Woldery wine.

MLAN. Ah! When they spied him to see if he would eat when they went away!

OOGNO. When they questioned him concerning the gods and Man!

THAHN. When they asked him why the gods permitted cancer!

SLAG. Ah, my wise master!

MLAN. How well his scheme has succeeded!

OOGNO. How far away is hunger!

THAHN. It is even like to one last year's dreams, the trouble of brief night long ago.

OOGNO [*laughing*]. Ho, ho, ho! Let us see them pray to us.

AGMAR. When we were beggars did we not speak as beggars? Did we not whine as they? Was not our misdeed beggarly?

OOGNO. We were the pride of our calling.

AGMAR. Then now that we are gods let us be as gods, and not mock our worshippers.

ULF. I think that the gods do mock their worshippers.

AGMAR. The gods have never mocked us. We are above all pinnacles that we have ever gazed at in dreams.

ULF. I think that when man is high then most of all are the gods wont to mock him.

THIEF [*entering*]. Master! I have been with those that know all and see all. I have been with the thieves and master. They know me for one of their craft, but they do not know me for being one of us.

AGMAR. Well, well!

THIEF. There is danger, master. There is great danger.

AGMAR. You mean that they suspect that we are men.

HIEF. That they have long done, ter. I mean that they will know. Then we are lost.

GMAR. Then they do not know it. HIEF. They do not know it yet, they will know it, and we are lost.

GMAR. When will they know it?

HIEF. Three days ago they suspected us.

GMAR. More than you think suspected us, but have any dared to say

HIEF. No, master.

GMAR. Then forget your fears, my f.

HIEF. Two men went on dromedaries three days ago to see if the gods were still at Marma.

GMAR. They went to Marma!

HIEF. Yes, three days ago.

OGNO. We are lost!

GMAR. They went three days ago?

HIEF. Yes, on dromedaries.

GMAR. They should be back to-

OGNO. We are lost!

HAHN. We are lost!

HIEF. They must have seen the n jade idols sitting against the mountains. They will say, "The gods still at Marma." And we shall be at.

LAG. My master will yet devise a

GMAR. [To the THIEF] Slip away to some high place and look toward the east and see how long we have to use a plan.

LAG. My master will find a plan.

OGNO. He has taken us into a trap.

HAHN. His wisdom is our doom.

LAG. He will find a wise plan yet.

HIEF [re-entering]. It is too late!

GMAR. It is too late!

HIEF. The dromedary men are

OGNO. We are lost!

GMAR. Be silent! I must think.

by all sit still. CITIZENS enter and prostrate themselves. AGMAR sits deep in thought]

ILLANAUN. [To AGMAR] Two holy pilgrims have gone to your sacred places, wherein you were wont to sit ere you left the mountains. [AGMAR nothing] They return even now.

GMAR. They left us here and went and the gods? A fish once took a man into a far country to find the

ILLANAUN. Most reverend deity, their piety is so great that they have gone to worship even your shrines.

AGMAR. I know these men that have great piety. Such men have often prayed to me before, but their prayers are not acceptable. They little love the gods; their only care is their piety. I know these pious ones. They will say that the seven gods were still at Marma. They will lie and say that we were still at Marma. So shall they seem more pious to you all, pretending that they alone have seen the gods. Fools shall believe them and share in their damnation.

OORANDER. [To ILLANAUN]. Hush! You anger the gods.

ILLANAUN. I am not sure whom I anger.

OORANDER. It may be they are the gods.

ILLANAUN. Where are those men from Marma?

CITIZEN. Here are the dromedary men; they are coming now.

ILLANAUN. [To AGMAR] The holy pilgrims from your shrine are come to worship you.

AGMAR. The men are doubters. How the gods hate the word! Doubt ever contaminated virtue. Let them be cast into prison and not besmirch your purity. [Rising] Let them not enter here.

ILLANAUN. But oh, most reverend deity from the Mountain, we also doubt, most reverend deity.

AGMAR. You have chosen. You have chosen. And yet it is not too late. Repent and cast these men in prison and it may not be too late. *The gods have never wept.* And yet when they think upon damnation and the dooms that are withering a myriad bones, then almost, were they not divine, they could weep. Be quick! Repent of your doubt.

[Enter the DROMEDARY MEN]

ILLANAUN. Most reverend deity, it is a mighty doubt.

CITIZENS. *Nothing has killed him! They are not the gods!*

SLAG. [To AGMAR] You have a plan, my master. You have a plan.

AGMAR. Not yet, Slag.

ILLANAUN. [To OORANDER] These are the men that went to the shrines at Marma.

OORANDER [*in a loud, clear voice*].
Were the Gods of the Mountain seated
still at Marma, or were they not there?
[*The BEGGARS get up hurriedly
from their thrones*]

DROMEDARY MAN. They were not
there.

ILLANAUN. They were not there?

DROMEDARY MAN. Their shrines
were empty.

OORANDER. Behold the Gods of the
Mountain!

AKMOS. They have indeed come
from Marma.

OORANDER. Come. Let us go away
to prepare a sacrifice. A mighty sacri-
fice to atone for our doubting.

[*Exeunt*]
SLAG. My most wise master!

AGMAR. No, no, Slag. I do not
know what has befallen. When I
went by Marma only two weeks ago
the idols of green jade were still seated
there.

OOGNO. We are saved now.

THAHN. Ay, we are saved.

AGMAR. We are saved, but I know
not how.

OOGNO. Never had beggars such a
time.

THIEF. I will go out and watch.

[*He creeps out*]

ULF. Yet I have a fear.

OOGNO. A fear? Why, we are
saved.

ULF. Last night I dreamed.

OOGNO. What was your dream?

ULF. It was nothing. I dreamed
that I was thirsty and one gave me
Woldery wine; yet there was a fear
in my dream.

THAHN. When I drink Woldery
wine I am afraid of nothing.

THIEF [*re-entering*]. They are mak-
ing a pleasant banquet ready for us;
they are killing lambs, and girls are
there with fruits, and there is to be
much Woldery wine.

MLAN. Never had beggars such a
time.

AGMAR. Do any doubt us now?

THIEF. I do not know.

MLAN. When will the banquet be?

THIEF. When the stars come out.

OOGNO. Ah! It is sunset already.
There will be good eating.

THAHN. We shall see the girls come
in with baskets upon their heads.

OOGNO. There will be fruits in the
baskets.

THAHN. All the fruits of the valley.

MLAN. Oh, how long we have
wandered along the ways of the world!

SLAG. Oh, how hard they were!

THAHN. And how dusty!

OOGNO. And how little wine!

MLAN. How long we have asked
and asked, and for how much!

AGMAR. We to whom all things
coming now at last!

THIEF. I fear lest my art forsake
me now that good things come without
stealing.

AGMAR. You will need your art
longer.

SLAG. The wisdom of my master
shall suffice us all our days.

[*Enter a frightened MAN. He kneels
before AGMAR and abases his forehead*]

MAN. Master, we implore you,
people beseech you.

[*AGMAR and the BEGGARS in
attitude of the gods sit silent*]

MAN. Master, it is terrible. [*The
BEGGARS maintain silence*] It is terrible
when you wander in the evening.
It is terrible on the edge of the desert
in the evening. Children die when
they see you.

AGMAR. In the desert? When do
you see us?

MAN. Last night, master. You were
terrible last night. You were terrible
in the gloaming. When your hands
were stretched out and groping for
You were feeling for the city.

AGMAR. Last night do you say?

MAN. You were terrible in the
gloaming!

AGMAR. You yourself saw us?

MAN. Yes, master, you were terri-
ble. Children too saw you and they
died.

AGMAR. You say you saw us?

MAN. Yes, master. Not as you are
now, but otherwise. We implore you,
master, not to wander at evening.
You are terrible in the gloaming.
You are —

AGMAR. You say we appeared now
as we are now. How did we appear
to you?

MAN. Otherwise, master, otherwise.

AGMAR. But how did we appear
to you?

MAN. You were all green, master,
all green in the gloaming, all of you
again as you used to be in the moun-
tains. Master, we can bear to see

in flesh like men, but when we rock walking it is terrible, it is ble.

GMAR. That is how we appeared to ?

LAN. Yes, master. Rock should walk. When children see it they not understand. Rock should not in the evening.

GMAR. There have been doubters te. Are they satisfied?

LAN. Master, they are terrified. re us, master.

GMAR. It is wrong to doubt. Go be faithful. [Exit MAN]

LAG. What have they seen, master?

GMAR. They have seen their own dancing in the desert. They have something green after the light gone, and some child has told them le that it was us. I do not know t they have seen. What should have seen?

LF. Something was coming this from the desert, he said.

LAG. What should come from the rt?

GMAR. They are a foolish people.

LF. That man's white face has some frightful thing.

LAG. A frightful thing?

LF. That man's face has been to some frightful thing.

GMAR. It is only we that have tened them and their fears have e them foolish.

er an ATTENDANT with a torch or lantern which he places in a receptacle. Exit]

HAHN. Now we shall see the faces he girls when they come to the quet.

LAN. Never had beggars such a

GMAR. Hark! They are coming. ar footsteps.

HAHN. The dancing girls! They coming!

HIEF. There is no sound of flutes, said they would come with music.

OGNO. What heavy boots they e; they sound like feet of stone.

HAHN. I do not like to hear their y tread. Those that would dance s must be light of foot.

GMAR. I shall not smile at them ey are not airy.

LAN. They are coming very slowly. y should come nimbly to us.

THAHN. They should dance as they come. But the footfall is like the footfall of heavy crabs.

ULF [in a loud voice, almost chanting]. I have a fear, an old fear and a boding. We have done ill in the sight of the seven gods. Beggars we were and beggars we should have remained. We have given up our calling and come in sight of our doom. I will no longer let my fear be silent; it shall run about and cry; it shall go from me crying, like a dog from out of a doomed city; for my fear has seen calamity and has known an evil thing.

SLAG [hoarsely]. Master!

AGMAR [rising]. Come, come!

[They listen. No one speaks.

The stony boots come on. Enter in single file through door in right of back, a procession of SEVEN GREEN MEN, even hands and faces are green; they wear greenstone sandals; they walk with knees extremely wide apart, as having sat cross-legged for centuries; their right arms and right forefingers point upward, right elbows resting on left hands; they stoop grotesquely. Halfway to the footlights they left wheel. They pass in front of the SEVEN BEGGARS, now in terrified attitudes, and six of them sit down in the attitude described, with their backs to the audience. The leader stands, still stooping]

OGNO [cries out just as they wheel left]. The Gods of the Mountain!

AGMAR [hoarsely]. Be still! They are dazzled by the light. They may not see us.

[The leading GREEN THING points his forefinger at the lantern — the flame turns green. When the six are seated the leader points one by one at each of the SEVEN BEGGARS, shooting out his forefinger at them. As he does this each beggar in his turn gathers himself back on to his throne and crosses his legs, his right arm goes stiffly upward with forefinger erect, and a staring look of horror comes into his eyes. In this attitude the BEGGARS sit motionless while a green light falls upon their faces. The Gods go out]

Presently enter the CITIZENS, some with victuals and fruit. One touches a beggar's arm and then another's]

CITIZEN. They are cold; they have turned to stone.

[All abase themselves, foreheads to the floor]

ONE. We have doubted them. have doubted them. They have turned to stone because we have doubted them.

ANOTHER. They were the true gods.

ALL. They were the true gods.

CURTAIN

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ams, H. Davenport. *Dictionary of the Drama*. Vol. I. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1904.
- cher, William. *English Dramatists of To-day*. London, 1882.
- About the Theatre*. London, 1886.
- Playmaking*. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co. 1912.
- The Theatrical World, 1893-1897*. London.
- W. C. Macready. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1890.
- ker, H. Barton. *History of the London Stage and Its Famous Players, 1576-1903*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1904.
- nerrofts, The. *Recollections of Sixty Years*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1909.
- rker, Granville, and William Archer. *Schemes and Estimates for a National Theatre*. New York: Duffield & Co. 1908.
- rie, Sir James M. *The Plays of*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1918.
[In progress of publication.]
- es, Katherine Lee. *English Drama, A Working Basis*. Wellesley College, 1896.
- rsa, Mario. *The English Stage of To-day*. Translated from the original Italian, and edited with a Prefatory Note by Selwyn Brinton, M.A. New York: John Lane Co. 1908.
- yd, Ernest A. *The Contemporary Drama of Ireland*. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1917.
- ereton, Austin. *The Life of Henry Irving*. (2 vols.) New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1908.
- own, T. Allston. *History of the New York Stage*. (3 vols.) New York: Dodd, Mead and Co. 1903.
- Cambridge History of English Literature. Vol. XIII, Chap. VIII, pp. 255-274.
Also Vol. XIII: Bibliography, Chap. XIII, pp. 560-568.
- arter, Huntly. *The New Spirit in Drama and Art*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. 1913.
- andler, F. W. *Aspects of Modern Drama*. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1914.
- ark, Barrett. *The British and American Drama of To-day*. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1915. [Study outlines of Pinero, Jones, Wilde, Shaw, Barker, Phillips, Hankin, Chambers, Davies, Galsworthy, Masfield, Houghton, Sowerby, Baker, Barrie, Francis.]
- le, J. W. *Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean*. London, 1859.
- ok, Dutton. *Hours with the Players*. (2 vols.) London: Chatto and Windus. 1881.
- Nights at the Play*. (2 vols.) London, 1883.

- Dickinson, Thomas H. *The Contemporary Drama of England*. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1917.
- Chief Contemporary Dramatists. Selected and edited. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1915.
- Dukes, Ashley. *Modern Dramatists*. Chicago: C. H. Sergel & Co. 1912.
- Escott, T. H. S. *Social Transformation of the Victorian Age. A Survey of Conditions and Country*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1897.
- Faxon, T. W. (Editor). *Dramatic Index*. 1911 *seq.* Boston: Boston Book Co.
- Filon, Augustin. *The English Stage. Being an Account of the Victorian Drama*. Translated from the French by Frederic Whyte, with an Introduction by Henry Arthur Jones. New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co. 1897.
- Fitzgerald, Percy. *Sir Henry Irving. A Biography*. Philadelphia: George V. Jacobs & Co.
- Forshay, Florence E. *Twentieth Century Dramas. English — Irish — American*. Boston: Boston Book Co. 1917.
- Grein, J. T. *Premières of the Year*. London, 1901.
- Henderson, Archibald. *The Changing Drama. Contributions and Tendencies*. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1914.
- European Dramatists*. Cincinnati: Stewart & Kidd Co. 1913. [Contains essays on Wilde, Shaw, and Barker.]
- George Bernard Shaw: *His Life and Works. A Critical Biography*. Cincinnati: Stewart & Kidd Co. 1911.
- Hale, Edward Everett, Jr. *Dramatists of To-day*. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1905. [Pinero, Shaw, Phillips.]
- Hollingshead, John. *Gaiety Chronicles*. Westminster. Constable & Co. 1899.
- Houghton, Stanley. *Works*. Edited with an Introduction by Harold Brighouse (3 vols.) London: Constable. 1914.
- Howe, P. P. *Dramatic Portraits*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. 1911. [Essays on Pinero, Jones, Wilde, Barrie, Shaw, Hankin, Barker, Davis, and Galsworthy.]
- The Repertory Theatre. A Record and a Criticism*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. 1911.
- Bernard Shaw: *A Critical Study*. New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co. 1911.
- Jackson, Holbrook. *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. 1914.
- Jones, Henry Arthur. *The Foundations of a National Drama. A Collection of Lectures, Essays, and Speeches, delivered and written in the years 1890-1912*. New York: George H. Doran Co. 1913.
- The Renaissance of the English Drama. Essays, Lectures, Fragments relating to the Modern English Stage, written and delivered in the years 1883-1894*. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1895.
- MacCarthy, Desmond. *The Court Theatre, 1904-1907. A Commentary and Criticism*. London: A. H. Bullen. 1907.

- ern Drama and Opera. A Reading List. (Mulliken.) Boston: Boston Book Co. 1911. Another more comprehensive edition issued in 1915.
- ore, George. Impressions and Opinions. New York: Brentano's. 1913.
- rley, Henry. A Playgoer's Notebook, 1851-1866. London, 1891.
- ttleton, George Henry. English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1642-1780. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1914.
- mer, John L. The Censor and the Theatres. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. 1913.
- The Future of the Theatre. [Read essays on comedy by Palmer and Meredith.] London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd. 1913.
- se, Edw. R. The History of the Fabian Society. London, 1916.
- aberton, T. Edgar. The Kendalls.
- John Hare. [Reminiscences also in *London Strand*. 1908.]
- Sir Charles Wyndham.
- nce, John Alexander. The Masterpieces of Modern Drama. (2 vols.) I. English and American. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1915.
- bertson, J. Forbes, and W. May Phelps. Life and Life-work of Samuel Phelps. London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. 1886.
- tt, Clement. The Drama of Yesterday and To-day. (2 vols.) New York: The Macmillan Co. 1899.
- w, George Bernard. Dramatic Opinions and Essays. (2 vols.) New York: Brentano's. 1906. [All of Shaw's plays are issued by Brentano's.]
- hl, Dr. Ernst Leopold. Das Englische Theater im 19 Jahrhundert. Berlin, 1914.
- ker, Bram. Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving. (2 vols.) New York: The Macmillan Co. 1906.
- nons, A. Plays, Acting and Music. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1909.
- lock, John S. P., and Robert G. Martin. Representative English Plays. From the Middle Ages to the End of the Nineteenth Century. Edited, with Introductions and Notes. New York: The Century Co. 1916.
- ry, Ellen. The Story of My Life. Recollections and Reflections. New York: The McClure Co. 1908.
- rnbee, William. The Diaries of William Charles Macready, 1833-1851. (2 vols.) New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1912.
- ill, H. D. Social England. (Victorian Period.) Vols. 1-6. London: Cassell & Co. 1893-1897.
- ikley, A. B. Drama and Life. New York: Brentano's. 1908.
- Playhouse Impressions. London.
- ygandt, Cornelius. Irish Plays and Playwrights. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1913.
- ndham, H. S. Annals of the Covent Garden Theatre. London, 1905.

INDIVIDUAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR PLAYS

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES

Richard B. Knowles, "Life of James Sheridan Knowles", edited by Francis Vevey, London, 1872; John Westland Marston, "Our Recent Actors", London: John Westland Marston, Searle, & Rivington, Ltd., 1890.

DOUGLAS JERROLD

"Dictionary of National Biography"; John Forster, "The Life of Charles Dickens", London: Chapman & Hall, 1873-1874; Blanchard Jerrold, "The Life and Remains of Douglas Jerrold", London: W. Kent & Co., 1859; Walter Jerrold, "Douglas Jerrold and *Punch*", London: Macmillan & Co., 1910; T. Edgar Clifton, "Charles Dickens and the Stage", London, 1888; W. Teignmouth Clifton, "Charles Dickens and His Friends", London: Cassell & Co., 1909; M. H. Clifton, "History of *Punch*", London: Cassell & Co., 1895; Edmund Hodgson Clifton, "His Recollections and Experiences", London: R. Bentley & Son, 1884.

SIR EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

"Cambridge History of English Literature", edited by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, Cambridge: University Press, 1907-1916, Chap. XIII, pp. 417-442 — Victorian Era; "Dictionary of National Biography"; "Life, Letters and Literary Remains", by his son, 2 vols., London: K. Paul, Trench & Co., 1883; "Richelieu", London *Theatre*, 1882, 2: 75.

DION BOUCICAULT

Montrose J. Moses, "Famous Actor-Families in America", New York: Thomas Crowell & Co., 1906; Charles Eyre Pascoe, "The Dramatic List", Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1879; Townsend Walsh, "The Career of Dion Boucicault", New York: Dunlap Society, 1915.

ROBERT BROWNING

Arlo Bates, "A Blot in the 'Seutecheon'", *The Belles-Lettres Series*, Boston: C. Heath & Co., 1904; W. L. Courtney, "Browning as a Writer of Plays", *Trinity Review*, 39: 888; T. Lounsbury, "Philistine View of a Browning Play", *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1899; Elizabeth McCracken, "Stage Productions of Browning's Plays", *Poet-Lore*, April-June, 1903, 14: 115-131; Mrs. Sutherland, "Life and Letters of Robert Browning", London, 1891.

TOM TAYLOR

John Coleman, "Charles Reade as I Knew Him", London: Treherne & Co. 1903; "Dictionary of National Biography"; T. Edgar Pemberton, "Lord Dunsyre: A Memoir of Edward Askew Sotherton", New York: Knickerbocker Press, 191-; Thomas Purnell, "Dramatists of the Present Day" [by "Q"], London: Chapman & Hall, 1871; M. H. Spielmann, "History of *Punch*", London: Cassell & Co., 1895; Tom Taylor, "On Buckstone", London *Theatre*, December, 1879; Tom Taylor, "Historical Plays", London: Chatto & Windus, 1877; Tom Taylor, "Some Thoughts on the English Stage", *Every Saturday*, February 13, 1869; Tom Taylor, "Villemarqué's Barsaz-Breiz", translated as "Ballads and Songs of Brittany", London: Macmillan & Co., 1865.

THOMAS WILLIAM ROBERTSON

William Archer, "Theatrical Year-book", 1904, p. 53; "Dictionary of National Biography"; T. Edgar Pemberton, "Society and Caste", *The Belles-Lettres Series*, Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1905; G. B. Shaw, "Dramatic Opinions and Essays", Vol. II, p. 281, New York: Brentano's, 1906; E. A. Sotherton, "Memoir of Lord Dunsyre", T. Edgar Pemberton, New York: Knickerbocker Press, 191-; "Thomas W. Robertson, The Principal Dramatic Works of", with memoir by his son (2 vols.), London, 1889.

WILLIAM SCHWENCK GILBERT

William Archer, "English Dramatists of To-day", London: S. Lowe, Marston Searle & Rivington, 1882; Rutland Barrington, "W. S. Gilbert", London *Bookman*, July, 1911, Vol. 40, pp. 157-161; François Cellier and Cunningham Bridgeman, "Gilbert and Sullivan and Their Operas", Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1914; "Dictionary of National Biography"; Benjamin William Findon, "Sir Arthur Sullivan: His Life and Music", London: J. Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1904; "W. S. Gilbert, An Account by Himself", London *Theatre*, April 2, 1883; W. S. Gilbert, "A Stage Play", 3rd series, Playmaking, III, Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, Introduction by William Archer, 1916; Walter J. Wells, "Souvenir of Sir Arthur Sullivan", London: Newnes, 1901.

ALFRED TENNYSON

William Archer, "The Theatrical World", 1894, p. 208; Maurice F. Egarr, "Saint Thomas of Canterbury and Becket", *Catholic World*, December, 1885, Vol. 42, pp. 382-395; Paul Jellinghaus, "Tennyson's Drama 'Harold'", Dissertation, Borna-Leipzig, 1905; Louis Grünert, "Tennyson's Drama Becket", Dissertation, Weimar, 1913; Henry Irving, "Becket: A Tragedy in a Prologue and Four Acts" by Alfred Lord Tennyson, as arranged for the stage, and presented at the Lyceum Theatre on February 6, 1893, London: Macmillan & Co., 1904; Henry James, "Views and Reviews", Boston: Ball Publishing Co., 1908; Hallam Tennyson, "Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir, by his son" (2 vols.), London: Macmillan & Co., 1897.

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

J. D. Howells, "Plays of Henry Arthur Jones", *North American Review*, October, 1907, 186: 205-212; H. A. Jones, "The Theatre of Ideas", New York: George H. Doran Co., 1915; Henry Arthur Jones, "Introduction to the Law of Drama, by Ferdinand Brunetière", 1st series, Papers on Playmaking, III, Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, 1914; Henry Arthur Jones, Introduction to "Michael and His Lost Angel" (The Macmillan Co., 1896), "The Crusaders" (1893), "Saints and Sinners" (1891), "Judah" (1894), "The Case of Filious Susan" (1897), "The Divine Gift" (Duckworth, 1913); "Modern Drama and Opera", reading list of the works of various authors, Boston: Boston Book Co., 1911-1915. See General Bibliography.

OSCAR WILDE

Dictionary of National Biography"; Frank Harris, "Contemporary Portraits", New York: Kennerley, 1915; Leonard C. Ingleby, "Oscar Wilde: Some Miscellanies", London: T. W. Laurie, 1914; A. Ransome, "Life of Oscar Wilde, Critical Study", London: M. Seeker, 1912; Robert Harborough Sherard, "Oscar Wilde: the Story of an Unhappy Friendship", London: Hermes Press, 1902; Robert Harborough Sherard, "The Real Oscar Wilde", London: T. W. Laurie, 1915.

ARTHUR WING PINERO

William Archer, "Theatrical World", 1895, Foreword by Pinero; W. L. Courtney, "The Idea of Tragedy", Prefatory Note by Pinero, New York: Brentano's, 1902; H. Hamilton Fyfe, "Arthur Wing Pinero, A Study", London, 1902; Paul Julius, "Arthur Wing Pinero und das englische Drama der Jetztzeit", Brussels, 1900; Charles Hastings, "Le Théâtre Français et Anglais", Paris, 1900, translated by Frances A. Welby, 1901; Clayton Hamilton (Editor), "The Social Plays of Arthur Wing Pinero", Vol. I, "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray", "The Notorious Ebb-smith" (successive volumes to follow), New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1902; "Modern Drama and Opera": reading list of the works of various authors, Boston: Boston Book Co., 1911-1915; A. W. Pinero, "The Modern English Drama", London *Theatre*, n. s. 35: 346, June, 1895; A. W. Pinero, London *Theatre*, n. s. 13: 317, June 1, 1889; A. W. Pinero, "Robert Louis Stevenson as a Dramatist", 1st series, Papers on Playmaking, IV, Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, Introduction by Clayton Hamilton, 1914; Wilibald Stöcker, "Oscar Wilde's Dramen; Studien über Motive, Charaktere und Technik" (*Anglia*, Vol. 35, 1899-79, Halle, 1911).

JOHN GALSWORTHY

W. L. Courtney, "Realistic Drama", *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1913, 100: 103-104; Sheila Kaye-Smith, "John Galsworthy", New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1914 (*Writers of the Day Series*); John Galsworthy, "The Inn of Tranquillity: Studies and Essays", New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912; "Modern Drama and Opera", reading list of the works of various authors, Boston: Boston Book Co., 1911-1915.

ST. JOHN HANKIN

John Drinkwater, "The Dramatic Works of St. John Hankin" (3 vols.), New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913.

H. GRANVILLE BARKER

"Modern Drama and Opera", reading list, Boston: Boston Book Co., 1915.

JOHN MASEFIELD

Bulletin of Bibliography, Vol. 8, No. 6, p. 158, April, 1915, Boston: Boston Book Co.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Ernest A. Boyd, "The Contemporary Drama of Ireland", Boston: Little Brown, & Co., 1917; Darrell Figgis, "Studies and Appreciations", London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1912; Stephen Gwynn, "An Uncommercial Theatre", *Fortnightly Review*, 1902, 78: 1051, December; Katharine Tynan Hinkson, "Twenty-five Years: Reminiscences", London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1913; J. M. Honan, "William Butler Yeats, the Poet of Contemporary Ireland", Dublin: Maunsell & Co., Ltd., 1915; Horatio Sheafe Krans, "William Butler Yeats and the Irish Literary Revival", New York: Doubleday, 1904; "Modern Drama and Opera", reading list of the works of various authors, Boston: Boston Book Co., 1911-1915; George Moore, "Hail and Farewell", also in *English Review*, 1914, 5: 167-183, 350-364; Forrest Reid, "William Butler Yeats, A Critical Study", New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1915; *Samhain*, files, 1901 seq., Dublin: 1901-1908; Allan Wade, "Bibliography of the Writings of William Butler Yeats", Shakespeare Head Press, also in *Collected Works*, Vol. VIII.

JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

Maurice Bourgeois, "John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre", London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1913; Darrell Figgis, "Studies and Appreciations", London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1912; James Huneker, "The Pathos of Distance", New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913; P. P. Howe, "J. M. Synge, Critical Study", London: M. Secker, 1912; John Masefield in "Dictionary of National Biography"; John Masefield, "John M. Synge: A Few Personal Recollections, with Biographical Notes", New York: The Macmillan Co., 1915; W. B. Yeats, *Collected Works*, London: Chapman & Hall, 1908; "The Cutting of an Agate", New York: The Macmillan Co., 1912; J. B. Yeats, *New York Sun*, July, 1909.

LADY AUGUSTA GREGORY

Lady Gregory, "Our Irish Theatre, A Chapter of Autobiography", New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913; Cornelius Weygandt, "Irish Plays and Playwrights", Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913.

PADRAIC COLUM

Cornelius Weygandt, "Irish Plays and Playwrights", Boston: Houghton
n Co., 1913.

LORD DUNSANY

Edward Hale Bierstadt, "Dunsany, the Dramatist", Boston: Little, Brown,
., 1917 (contains bibliographies and casts); Lord Dunsany, "Romance and
Modern Stage", *National Review*, July, 1911, Vol. 57, pp. 827-835; Review of
anor's Enterprise", by George Birmingham, *Saturday Review*, December,
; Critique on Abbey Theatre, *Saturday Review*, June, 1910.

